SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

PSM

INDEPENDENT PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

SEPT 2007

10 YEARS OF PSM

TEN MOMENTS that defined PlayStation

TEN GAMES that changed everything!

REVEALED The secret downfall of PSM mascot, Patchy!

EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW

grand theft auto IV

This time you can see it's different!

FIRST mission details

New characters REVEALED

EXCLUSIVE screenshots you have to see to believe

ALSO

PREVIEWED 17 pages of PS3's biggest games

REVIEWED 16 games for PS3, PS2, and PSP

+ EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW BEOWULF

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STRANGLEHOLD'S
TRUE TO JOHN WOO
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Honor is his code.
Vengeance is his mission.
Bloodshed is his only option.

JOHN WOO PRESENTS

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PLAYSTATION® 3

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Letter from the editor

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US

I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT IT'S A LITTLE WEIRD to be overseeing the 10th Anniversary issue of PSM just three months into my tenure here. In the pantheon of videogame magazines, none have enjoyed a consistent staff presence like PSM. Career changes, life changes, magazine coverage changes, platform changes – they can all make editors move around, move on, move out. PSM has been consistency incarnate, and just a few short months ago, it got all shook up.

So despite 127 issues, hundreds of thousands of words, and virtually the entire history of PlayStation chronicled and reviewed, it feels like just the beginning.

About two weeks ago – roughly mid-June – I felt the breeze change ever so slightly. Like the pendulum that had been swinging long and hard against Sony in the broader videogame world had stretched as far as it could. Despite the mauling the PS3 has taken in the community over its price, game line-up, or any of numerous other excuses to take a swing, the PS3 was still in the game. Xbox 360, despite the year head start, was not out of sight, and maybe even some of the lavish gloss was coming off Nintendo's Wii long-term outlook.

I got a feeling – that I initially dismissed as indigestion – and then said the words out loud: "It's got as bad as it's going to get..." It started with our feature about the Top 10 PS3 games for this year in the July issue. We had to expand it to 20 to get in all the ones we were genuinely excited about. Then we started having to figure out what games we'd devote more space to in each issue, which is standard magazine practice unless you're hindered by insufficient options to make it much of a choice.

... despite 127 issues, hundreds of thousands of words, and virtually the entire history of PlayStation chronicled and reviewed, **it feels like just the beginning.**

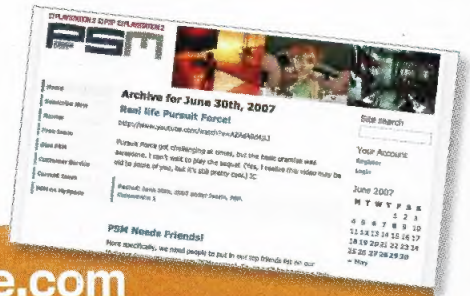
#1
It seems like just yesterday...

I mean, I still can't wait to play *Mass Effect* and *Halo 3* on Xbox 360. Or *Bioshock*, *Half-Life Episode 2*, and *Crysis* on PC (I still don't own a Wii). But *Uncharted*, *LittleBigPlanet*, *MGS4*, *GTA IV*, and *Assassin's Creed* are the tip of what's a pretty impressive PS3 iceberg.

That's just this year. As that pendulum swings back, drawn by the momentum of coming system sellers like Home, *Killzone 2*, and *Final Fantasy XIII*, we're rolling our sleeves up to prepare for the next 10 years! Okay, so we're taking it one issue at a time, and you'll be seeing those planned tweaks to the format over the next few issues. In the meantime, let me know how we're doing, what you want to see, and stick around for the next decade of PlayStation coverage!

Rob

editor@psmonline.com



www.PSMonline.com

At long last, the PSM web site is live and kicking. Don't expect fancy bells and whistles – it's a place for us to bring you up-to-date news and views on what's happening on a daily basis, as well as staff blogs, videos, and other bits to support your PS3 information habit.

We've taken some flak, though, as a casualty of our change was the old forums suffering a swift demise. I'd like to thank the moderators who kept those forums alive when we were absentee landlords. Hopefully you'll come by the new setup. By the time you read this, the new forums should be up and running, and we'll be regular visitors, using the site as a place to stay in touch with what the PSM audience wants to see and what you care about. So head to www.psmonline.com and introduce yourself.

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PREVIEWS

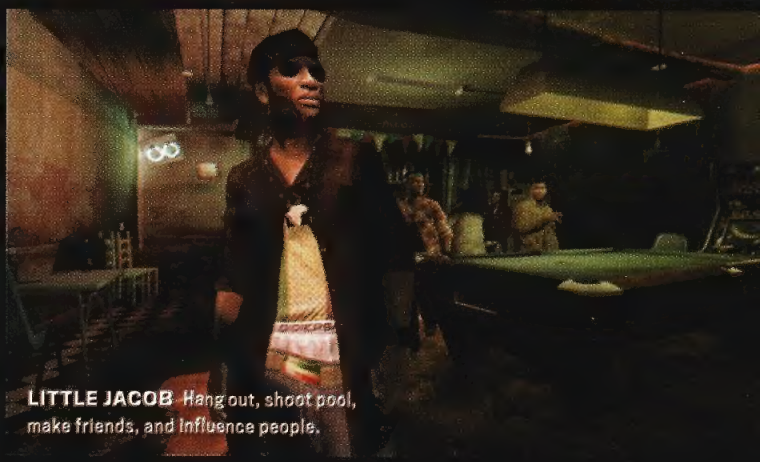
grand theft auto IV

It's like peeking through a tiny gap in the massive velvet curtain that obscures the largest stage in Videogame Land. We get a glimpse, and even an explanation, of what we're seeing, though it comes from a well-rehearsed troupe, delivering lines from a carefully prepared script. The director and actors of this grand ensemble production are conspicuously absent, sequestered far from the bright stage lights. We're even shuffled away from our sheltered vantage point during an intermission lest we catch sight of a prop or cue card (on the debug menu screen) that might tip the hat to a forthcoming treat in the performance. We take what we can, however, and we imagine the biggest game the PS3 has in 2007 delivering on its gargantuan promise.

THIS IS GTA IV. THE RULES ARE DIFFERENT, AND YOU'LL KNOW EVERYTHING WE DO BY THE TIME WE'RE FINISHED.

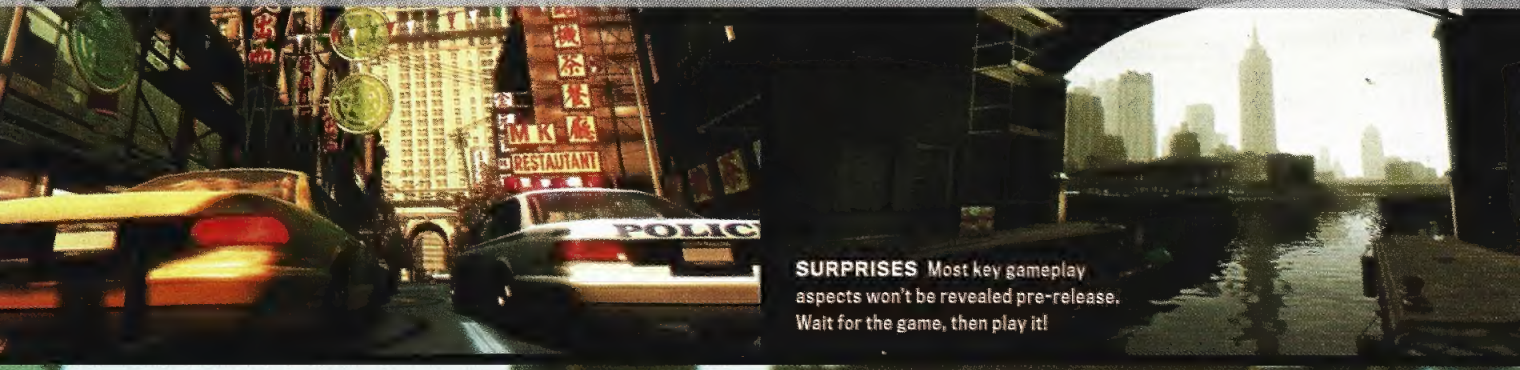
"It looks like its going to be another lovely day in Liberty City..."

SOUND OFF No word yet on the radio stations or soundtrack.



LITTLE JACOB Hang out, shoot pool, make friends, and influence people.

10 years ago The original *GTA* shipped for PC in 1997 to decent, if unspectacular, reviews. According to an interview in Gamasutra, DMA Design founder Dave Jones said the original name for the game was *Race-n-Chase*, but was changed before release to *Grand Theft Auto*.



SURPRISES Most key gameplay aspects won't be revealed pre-release. Wait for the game, then play it!

Grand Theft Auto IV

MAKE A BRAND NEW START OF IT IN LIBERTY CITY

It's our 10th anniversary, so we're bringing you a special birthday treat. No game is bigger for PS3 owners than GTA IV, and we got as much as we could from Rockstar on what to expect in the biggest game of the year™.

AVAILABLE	October 16th
TYPE	Action Adventure
MULTIPLAYER	Yes
ONLINE	To Be Announced
ESRB RATING	Pending
PUBLISHED BY	Rockstar Games
MADE BY	Rockstar North

Niko Bellic. New York city immigrant. October 2007. It's a time of the Patriot Act (though the Twin Towers and Ground Zero play no part in this fable). It's a time of opportunity, but one that's grounded in modern-day realities. A family friend needs help. Niko possesses a murky background in places far, far away... and he has a way with guns.

Nothing, it seems, will be easy. *GTA IV* eschews any cartoon-like hangover from its past iterations and brings the series in to the gritty future with the power of next-generation graphics. Every building is pock-marked with the scars of modern living. Graffiti stains walls, billboards, and the back of filth-splotched vans. We're sure if you bust out a scratch-and-sniff card, those musty, fishy, garbagey, 90% humidity aromas would assault your olfactory senses. This New York City... scratch that... Liberty City is real.

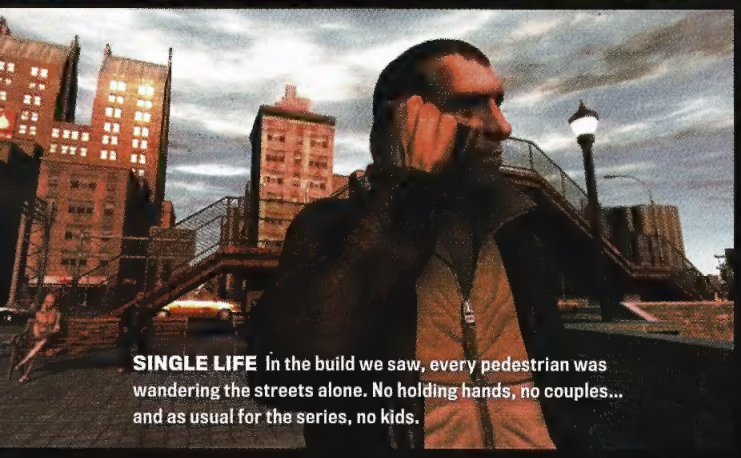
You play as Niko the way the developers sketch him out. Niko the immigrant. Niko of the shady past. Niko who won't get fat, get old, get tarted up in a Mohawk and tutu! *GTA IV* is not about customizing your ▸ 08

Start Small Though not confirmed, it's likely that at the outset you will be limited to a set area of the map, rather than letting you roam off across the entire city before getting a feel for how your role in this different world plays out.

BAD ROMAN Although we don't know how or why, Niko's introduction to crime in NYC stems from the problems of his cousin, Roman.

CALLING CARD

Just like real life in 2007, the cell phone is an integral part of most networking-type communication. You'll use it to receive and store information (text messages and phone numbers) or call contacts you've made. The phone appears to be a lynchpin to most of the emergent gameplay that allows you to act and react in the city how you choose. It might take a couple of days to get a call back from the law firm to confirm your interview. What happens if you choose to ignore that call? Maybe they leave a message. Maybe they call back later if it's important – possibly annoyed, possibly influencing your future options. Of course, you can also pick and choose when you're ready to take on a mission. The potential here is that missions may be time sensitive – do it now or lose it.



SINGLE LIFE In the build we saw, every pedestrian was wandering the streets alone. No holding hands, no couples... and as usual for the series, no kids.

SIGHT-SEEING Here's the world famous Brooklyn Bridge (why, yes, it is for sale...). You'll also be able to fly a helicopter.

Size Matters Though clearly vastly more detailed, the actual land mass size of Liberty City is about three-quarters that covered in the sprawling *San Andreas*.

◀ 006 character and attaining some king of New York position; it's about evolving through Niko's experiences, though still making your own choices about where to go and what to do.

PAST IMPERFECT

You get to browse Niko's resume (including references to the Balkan Peace Force and proficiency in swimming, shooting, and boxing) as part of a mission we witnessed that involved him getting an interview at a law firm. Submitting an application involves visiting the nearest internet café – the "tw@" (I wish I were making that up) – where you log in, browse web sites, and send email.

For this hit-in-the-making, Niko calls his buddy, Little Jacob. How does he become your buddy? Through hanging out, playing pool – and yes, there will be a pool mini-game – establishing a relationship with the guy. With the trust earned, the trunk of Jacob's car will be your regular gun emporium; again, this is 2007, and you don't just walk in to a store when you need to get armed for a job.

A call on Niko's cell phone sets up a meeting with the dodgy police officer, Frank McCreary (he has dirt on you, referencing a hit you probably made earlier in the game), who supplies the cell number to a mark who has a memory stick you need. When you arrive at the Humboldt River Viewpoint, you call the number and watch to see who answers. Now random pedestrians could also be answering cell phones, so you need to be observant. Then, with the mark identified and on the move, you close in and pop a cap in his noggin.

What happens now? The law arrives in force, and an area of the map HUD starts to flash, with you right in the center. This is *GTA IV*'s more succinct handling of warning level. You need to get out of the flashing area to get the cops off your tail. Since the cops now communicate with each other, providing line-of-sight eyewitness accounts of the street you're on (they're all named) and what direction you're heading, it's not as easy as it sounds. Though yet to be officially confirmed, you may be able to disguise your ride at a car wash (rather than with a paint job) to lower the warning level.

The bigger the crime, the bigger the flashing circle, and if it's serious – like taking out police officers – the warning area will fill the entire HUD map. Around the edge of the mini-map HUD is a thin green band that serves as your health bar, and it's likely that you'll be able to procure a bulletproof vest that could add another ring to indicate how much damage is taken.

TAKE COVER

You'll need some protection if the next mission we saw was any indication. After getting the call back for an interview, you visit the Perseus men's clothing store to buy a suit, enter the law offices, and calmly wait for your appointment with Mr. Goldberg,

WARNING RADIUS As you race to get out of the flashing area, your position is reset in the center when the cops spot you. Drive fast, and stay out of trouble!

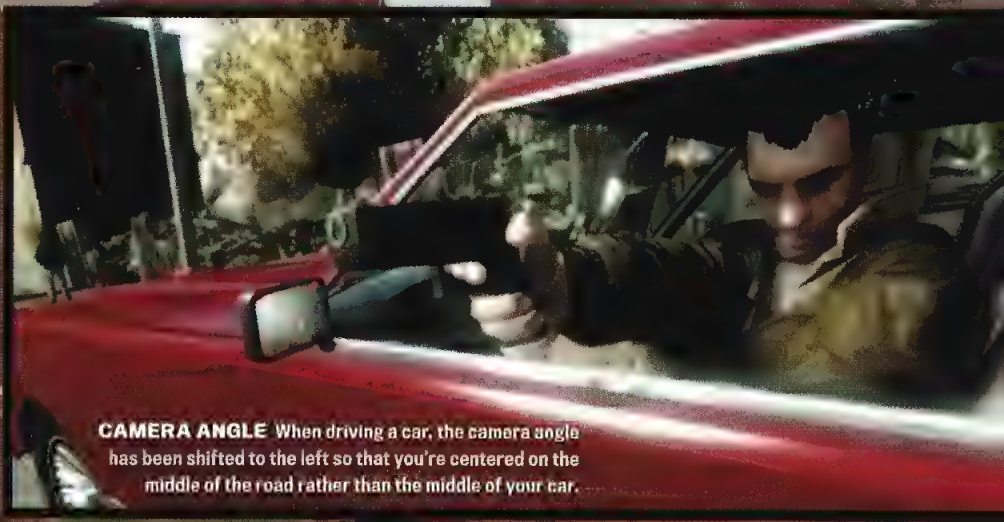
ARMED We saw Niko using a couple of different pistols, an Uzi, and Little Jacob's trunk had a few rifles, including sniper options, and others.

HEALTH FOOD With no random floating hearts, you'll regain health by eating and sleeping (And possibly with courtesy of hookers, too!).

Jack a 'copter In the final shootout we witnessed after shooting Goldberg, a police helicopter actually landed on Niko's head, killing him. We're not sure if that was a bug – in a build that was referred to as being quite early despite it being just four months from release – or illustrating the mind-boggling potential of open-ended gameplay.

YO! TAXEEE!

Sure, you can smash the window of a stationary car to get those needed wheels, but that brings attention, and with the nature of many of your missions, that's expressly what you need to avoid. So hop in a cab and pay the fare. You can enjoy the ride and take in the scenery or hit one button to skip immediately to your destination. To tell the cabbie where to go, you hit pause to bring up the map, set a waypoint, and off you go.



CAMERA ANGLE When driving a car, the camera angle has been shifted to the left so that you're centered on the middle of the road rather than the middle of your car.

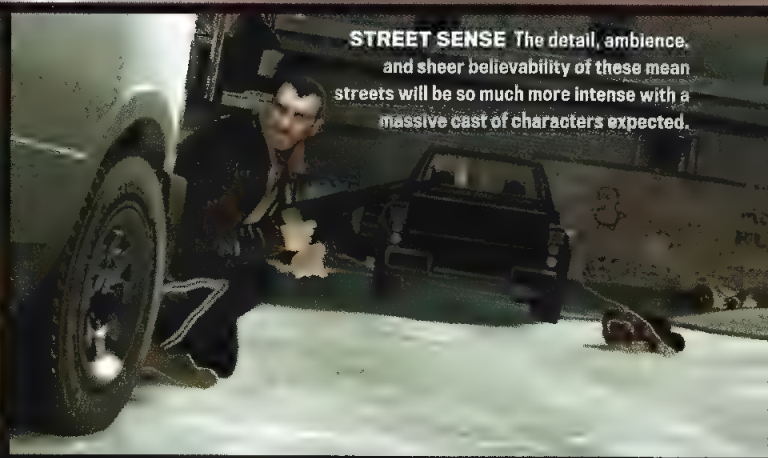
partner in the law firm Goldberg, Ligner and Shyster. Once sat in the one-on-one, you can pull the gun and complete your mission.

Of course, the secretary barging in to respond to the gunfire help alert security, and then all hell breaks loose. Leaving the office is no easy task. Niko can crouch behind cover, however, using a janitor's cart for protection from the cops responding to the gunfire. While pinned behind a wall, you could blind fire over your head, trying to suppress whoever's shooting at you.

Heading outside was like Butch and Sundance facing the Bolivian army, only this lot are NYPD, and the warning area flashed to the very edges of the map!

For *GTA IV*, New York City is the stage, and Niko Bellic is the player. Revelations about his past will at some point explain why he's proficient with all kinds of guns. It's unclear without starting at the beginning and delving in to his world – controller in hand – whether he's hero, anti-hero, or plain villain. We didn't get any sense that *GTA IV* was comedy, drama, or tragedy, though we're sure it will encompass each emotion. It certainly banks on your ability to connect with Niko, to care about his motivations; this is his story, and you'll change suits, jack cars, buy guns, run, gun, chase, and send your jacked cars hurtling over speed ramps all while pursuing Niko's personal American dream. ROB SMITH

HANG ON Niko has options on the mode of transportation he [illegible]



STREET SENSE The detail, ambience, and sheer believability of these mean streets will be so much more intense with a massive cast of characters expected.

Significant? Ligner is a Danish word meaning 'resemble' so the law firm name could be translated as Goldberg Resemble Shyster!

Heavenly Sword

MORE THAN JUST THE GODDESS OF WAR

PS3

AVAILABLE
September
TYPE
Action
MULTIPLAYER
To Be Announced
ONLINE
To Be Announced
ESRB RATING
Pending
PUBLISHED BY
Sony
MADE BY
Ninja Theory

LORD OF THE HEAVENLY SWORD

[illegible]

As more and more games go multiplatform, it's the exclusives that will help shape the side you pick – and few are as exciting as *Heavenly Sword*, a game that many affectionately refer to as "Goddess of War." It's a compliment to be considered in the same breath as the spectacular *God of War*, and it sums up *Heavenly Sword* succinctly, but after some hands-on time with the game, it's clear there's a bit more to it than that.

Heavenly Sword definitely seems to be a story-focused game: cutscenes abound, using tricks like occasional *24*-ish screen-in-screen moments. Through them we get a sense of the weirdness of this world where the protagonist, Nariko, tracks down her kidnapped father, slaughtering everyone who gets in her way with the titular Heavenly Sword. It's in these cutscenes that we see the technology at work, faithfully and impressively capturing the actors' wide range of facial nuances. No other videogame characters emote this well.

It's in the combat that similarities to *God of War* simply can't be ignored; Nariko's Heavenly Sword can be modified – by holding either L1 (Range Stance) or R1 (Power Stance) – to become lighter, Blades of Chaos-type weapons or a slower, more powerful sword. Plus, it uses popular "Cineractives" (to borrow a term from Activision's *Spider-Man 3*) to help vary the combat with railed sequences requiring timing-specific button presses.

Whether the combat can stay fresh remains to be seen, but we found it to be a joy so far. It doesn't hurt that the graphics – particularly the aforementioned faces and some of the environments – look simply amazing. If the rest of the game maintains this level of quality, we could be looking at an excellent reason to become a PS3 owner if you aren't already.

JUSTIN CHENG

OUCH! We hope it's her knees that she's aiming at because otherwise...

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: The *Star Wars Special Editions* were released in theaters, causing a wide range of emotions: joy because fans could finally see *Star Wars* on the big screen, and sorrow because Greedo shot first (among other issues).

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Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow

HOPEFULLY MORE THAN A SHADOW OF ITS PREDECESSOR'S SUCCESS

PSP

AVAILABLE	September
GENRE	Action
MULTIPLAYER	Yes
ONLINE	Yes
ESRB RATING	Pending
PUBLISHED BY	Sony
MADE BY	Sony Bend

STALKING Gabe hunts the deadliest prey.

THERMAL The dark blue color means someone didn't pay the electric bill again.

Last year's *Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror* was a simply amazing game – its greatness actually made us care again about the series as a whole. Since finishing *Dark Mirror*, we've been anxiously awaiting the next installment to this stealth series. So you could say we're pretty excited about *Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow*.

The first thing to note is that the story is written by acclaimed comic book writer Greg Rucka. Sony Bend Creative Director John Garvin says that Rucka has "written a story that looks at Lian's roots... in *Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror*, we looked at Gabe's past and came up with a few surprises. This time, Greg has given the word 'surprise' a whole new meaning."

The combat's been given some upgrades, too. "You can use a technique called 'blind fire' that allows you to shoot from behind cover," Garvin reveals. "While you can't aim, your fire will force enemies to duck, allowing you to pop up and get a few aimed shots in without taking damage. Our enhanced melee system allows you to grapple with an enemy, grab them from behind... you can cut their throat, break their neck, or walk around using them as a human shield. You have to be careful, though, because they will fight back, forcing you to do a mini-game to keep control of them. We've also added 360 degree underwater combat, which changes up gameplay considerably."

New combat means new weapons, and Game Play Lead Ron Allen divulges some of them: "The Spear Gun is our underwater sniper rifle: it's a scoped weapon that does a lot of damage. We've also introduced the Over-Under M4 Carbine that has a grenade launcher as an alternate fire mode."

So *Logan's Shadow* takes everything we loved about the prior game and improves upon it? That's what a sequel should do. Sounds like Gabe's in good hands. TERESA DUN

DOUBLE THE ACTION

[illegible]

ALL WET There are new mini-games to open doors.

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: Author Greg Rucka's second book in his Atticus Kodiak novel series, *Finder*, is released. To find [illegible] more, visit Rucka's official site, www.gregrucka.com.

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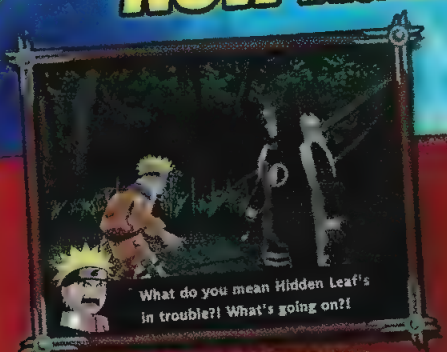

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Beowulf

PLAY ONE OLD, OLD, OLD SCHOOL STORY AGAIN

PS3

AVAILABLE	November
TYPE	Action
MULTIPLAYER	To Be Announced
ONLINE	No
ESRB RATING	Pending
PUBLISHED BY	Ubisoft
MADE BY	Ubisoft

For those of you who slept through high school English, *Beowulf* tells the story of, well, Beowulf, a "legendary Norse warrior-king reputed to have the strength of thirty men in his arms alone," according to Gilles Matouba, Creative Director of the *Beowulf* game. Our hero slays the demon Grendel and then deals with the wrath of Grendel's vengeful mother. This epic is being brought to the screen later this year in Robert Zemeckis' intriguing animation-style film.

The game, however, will focus on "the 30 year-period that is not explicitly explored in either the film or the poem," says Matouba, "wherein Beowulf is a young warrior and then, abruptly, an aging king. For thirty years, the player as Beowulf, will struggle with his conflicting desires for power, glory, and honor via moral dilemmas, bloody battles, and temptations."

As such, combat will play a significant role in the game, and what little we know about it sets a fascinating scene. On the PS3 version, you'll have an army of up to 20 thanes to command. "You will be able to order your warriors to target and decimate an enemy, hold a position and regroup to defend you," Matouba says. "You will use them to row your Drakkars (Viking longships), open and close passages, and even sing a raucous song or two! You will also be able to select weapons and earn various upgrades for your thanes including spears, axes, and a monstrous hammer."

Garnering an army's obedience takes work, though, and a system of heroic points will measure the effectiveness of your leadership skills. "The more you stand by your thanes and succeed in heroic acts, the more heroic points you get," Matouba explains. "As you progress your heroism, you will be able to command more thanes and order them to carry out different actions simultaneously. For example, you can order half your thanes to attack a particular enemy, and use the rest of them to support you against a horde of barbarians."

Beowulf himself will have a few unique moves. Matouba tells us that he'll be able to "grapple with his enemies and use a series of combos that will snap their necks or chuck them across

BAD NEWS Your Viking warlord wants to waterski...

HOMEWORK!

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BEOWULF STORY?

> It's believed to have been written around 1000 C.E., but the sole manuscript was unsigned and undated.

> The story is set around the 6th century C.E.

> The original poem is just over 3,000 lines in length.

> JRR Tolkien wrote a popular essay on Beowulf while a professor at Oxford University.

> Don't confuse it with the 1999 movie version starring Christopher "*Highlander*" Lambert and Rhona "early Lara Croft and then Playboy model" Mitra.

GROSS Are they three sheets to the wind? Groan!

10 years ago: Neil Gaiman – who wrote the *Beowulf* screenplay with Roger Avary – wrote the English adaptation for Hayao Miyazaki's animated film, *Princess Mononoke*.

HARD TIMES Think combat was rough? Remember, there was no toilet paper back then.

HEAVE! Changing a flat was risky...

the room... the grab allows the player to steal weapons right out of enemy scabbards." Matouba adds, "It is this kind of visceral, up-close-and-personal gameplay that best expresses Beowulf at his most brutal." Beowulf will also have two diametrically opposed super-powers that express his inner battle between his heroic side and his barbaric, carnal side. The Viking Storm is the player's ultimate heroic assault, launching his army of thanes in a group attack. Carnal Fury is his ultra-powerful state that sparks an unstoppable killing frenzy."

Beowulf is slated for release on both the PSP and the PS3, so obviously there will be some differences. For the PSP you'll have a personal guard of three thanes to fight for you. The other major difference is the camera angle: "The PS3 will support our 'View Mode' and is a third-person view, whereas the PSP is a top down view."

In order to avoid the usual pitfalls of other licensed games, Matouba tells us that Ubisoft "adapted the movie story to a hardcore gaming format that goes beyond the typical linear approach to a movie-license." We'll set aside the cynicism we reserve for most movie-based games for a minute to admit this game has piqued our interest. As soon as find out more, we'll let you know whether playing as this epic Norse king is all it's cracked up to be. TERESA DUN

SEEING STARS... MAYBE

The film has a star-studded cast (Sir Anthony Hopkins, John Malkovich, Angelina Jolie, and many others), but Matouba refused to reveal too much about their involvement in the game: "We have been fortunate to work with members of the amazing cast of the movie. We can say that their profound knowledge of their movie roles and outrageous talent truly adds an amazing dimension for the player. Their participation will definitely contribute to the overall quality of the players' journey."

The movie uses a computer animation technique similar to that used in *The Polar Express*.

10 years ago: Robert Zemeckis' [illegible] was released in theaters. It received mixed reviews, ultimately earning a 65% freshness rating on rottentomatoes.com.

Turning Point: Fall of Liberty

WORLD WAR II AS YOU'VE NEVER FOUGHT IT BEFORE

PS3

[illegible]	Q4 2007
[illegible]	Action
[illegible]	Yes
[illegible]	TBD
[illegible]	Pending
[illegible]	Codemasters
[illegible]	Spark Unlimited

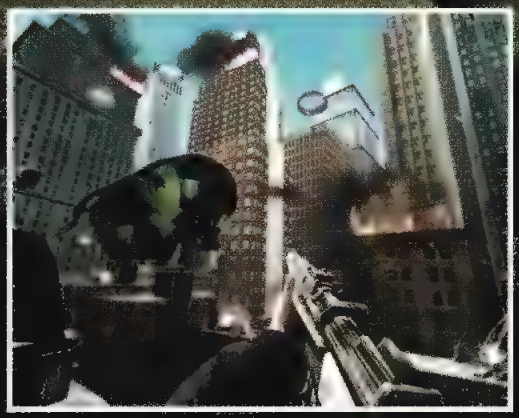
The year is 1953. Rock music is mostly doo-wop, a gallon of gas costs $.29, huge rear fins are the norm for cars, and NAZI PARATROOPERS ARE INVADING NEW YORK CITY! Okay, that's the way the folks at Codemasters want you to see it and here's how it happens.

Way back in 1931, Winston Churchill was struck by a cab while on a visit to New York. In this alternate future, he doesn't survive and so he never gets to make any of his empire-rousing speeches. As a direct result (and all of you history buffs will have to suspend your disbelief), England surrenders to the Nazis in 1940, and the Japanese never attack Pearl Harbor, so America is not drawn in to the conflict. The Nazis then bide their time, amassing a huge army, before attacking America via New York City in 1953.

Okay, I can hear you all now: "Geez, not another WWII game!" Well, shut your pie holes, because *Turning Point* offers a completely new premise to

OLD SCHOOL Gee... nothing says "limited invasion budget" like a dirigible.

HUGE BIG? Or just a really



BASTARDS Are burning down the Bowery.

Comic Carnage This isn't the first time WWII has time traveled into combat. Way back in the Silver Age of Comics, DC published *Star Spangled War Stories*, a comic that featured our Armed Forces fighting all manner of dinosaurs. It was first published in August of 1952 and ended its run in March of 1977.

FAST MOVER The Germans deploy[illegible] a few ME-262s in the real war.

FISH IN A BARREL Target[illegible] don't get any easier to acquire.

a genre that's been damn near bled dry. You play the part of Dan Carson, a high-iron worker who decides to fight back when the Nazis drop in to town.

You'll have to survive the initial onslaught, team up with other Resistance members, and wipe out the Wehrmacht. What sets *TP:FoL* apart is where the war happens. You're not waiting to assault some centuries-old French farmhouse. This time, the war invades New York City and Washington, D.C. Both cities feature historic landmarks, like the Empire State building and the White House. It's truly creepy seeing the capital all decked out in bright red Nazi banners.

Since it is 1953, those nasty Nazis will have even more futuristic weapons in their arsenal (and at least one interesting throwback). Watch for advanced versions of the ME-262, Germany's jet fighter, and the infrared goggles that the Nazis use for night fighting, not to mention the fact that the Germans have the Bomb and they're planning on using it on Manhattan! The drawback? Well, how about dropping paratroopers from dirigibles? It doesn't get much more old school than that.

As Dan Carson, you really don't have many military skills, so you'll have to rely on your brains and brawn, at least until you can get your hands on some dead kraut's gun. Don't be shy about sucker punching somebody, or shoving an unsuspecting enemy off a high building. Hey, this is war, right? It's kill or be killed! If you can survive the initial attack, you'll eventually join up with other Resistance types and battle to push the bad guys back to Europe. If you're successful, you'll end up in London for the final push.

With its unique, "what if?" story and sharp graphics, *TP:FoL* looks to be a refreshing shot in the arm of the WWII genre. We'll give you any additional skinny when we get it. BILL DONOHUE

FUTURE WEAPONS

While Nazi Germany never got to attack the United States directly during WWII, that didn't mean they weren't planning stuff. There were plans to launch 14 rockets (you probably know them as V2s) armed with [illegible] bombs, [illegible] U-boats, and there were plans to create a long-range, [illegible]-powered bomber, [illegible] the Amerika Bomber. [illegible]

10 YEARS OF PSM

Decade of Destruction Ten years ago, way back in 1997, you could still find plenty of combat games – they just didn't look as nice as *TP:FoL* does. Way back then, you'd be playing the original *Ace Combat* or *Warhawk* for your aerial thrills, and you'd be ground-pounding your way through the original *Command & Conquer*.

Condemned 2: Bloodshot

PREPARE TO BECOME AFRAID OF THE DARK

PS3

[illegible]	February 2008
[illegible]	Action Adventure
[illegible]	Yes
[illegible]	Yes
[illegible]	Pending
[illegible]	Sega
[illegible]	Monolith

MUSIC SETS THE TONE

[illegible]

Sometimes known as the game where you smack people with a lead pipe, the Xbox 360 launch title *Condemned: Criminal Origins* was a truly scary first-person action game where you chased after serial killers in dark, dilapidated environments. While we PlayStation faithful missed out the first time around, we will get to see what other horrors developer Monolith has in store for us with its sequel, *Condemned 2: Bloodshot*.

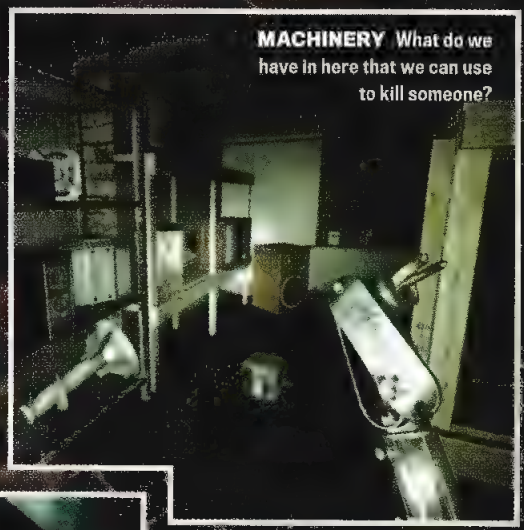
Condemned 2 continues the story of cop Ethan Thomas who returns to the Serial Crimes Unit to locate his missing partner. After the events of the first game (which we hope will be recapped for everyone who didn't play *Criminal Origins*), Ethan's a changed man. "Ethan has really bottomed out due to the bizarre events he experienced during the time between games and his inability to make sense of it all," explains David Hasle, producer at Monolith. "He's a battered soul filled with anger, hatred, and a smoldering drive to make someone pay for the pain he suffers." (Kind of like Anakin Skywalker, only less whiny.) Hasle continues, "The first game was solely about fear

+ SURPRISE! Guess where this evil thing is hiding out...

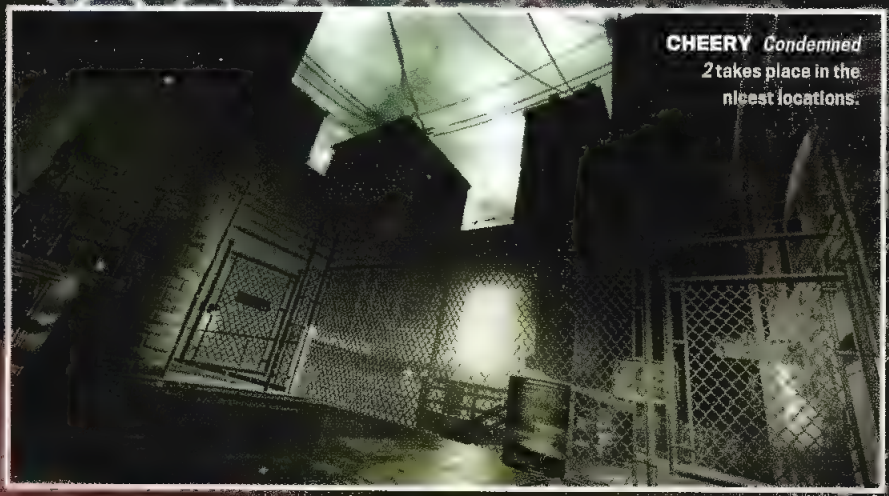
10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: Monolith released *Blood*, a first-person shooter for Macs and PCs that used the *Duke Nukem 3D* Build engine.

[illegible] Nope, th[illegible] [illegible]n't right...



MACHINERY What do we have in here that we can use to kill someone?



CHEERY *Condemned 2* takes place in the nicest locations.

and confusion. In *Condemned 2: Bloodshot*, Ethan is back and playing by his own rules." A loose cannon at large in a world where crazed killers lurk in every darkened corner? Sounds like a violent good time to us.

It's nice to know that the combat's deeper, then. "Melee combat is now more than just swinging a pipe," Hasle says. "The player can duke it out with fists, throw objects, crack heads open with bottles, ignite enemies with tasers, throw them headfirst into TVs, and much more. In fact, the list of opportunities is huge and the A.I. will be right there to challenge the player, pushing them to experiment and utilize all of these options in order to survive." There's more than one way to take down a psychopath, it seems, and all of them make using a lead pipe as a weapon sound almost tame.

Speaking of which, while you may have a lot of options for dispatching enemies, it's always comforting to have a weapon in hand. Hasle promises that you'll have a diverse arsenal at your disposal. "The pipe will definitely be back, along with several other favorites," Hasle reveals. "We've greatly expanded our weapons, however, which now include thrown weapons such as bottles or a billiard ball. We have also increased the number of general weapons and mission-specific weapons... we've also added a number of new firearms." Of course, *Condemned 2* is not the fragfest that, say, *Unreal Tournament III* is, so you probably won't be wasting bad guys with an RPG anytime soon...

What you will get in this sequel, however, is some sort of multiplayer, which was missing from the original game. Whether it's cooperative play or head-to-head remains to be seen, but the little Hasle did reveal seems to indicate it's the latter: "We are working on several gameplay modes that will allow players to bring some of the trademark single-player elements into a brutal multiplayer environment," he says. Obviously, it's still early, so the dev team has time to work out what, exactly, the multiplayer will entail, but based on Monolith's track record (which includes *F.E.A.R.*, as well as a number of excellent PC titles), we fully expect it to be, at the very least, good.

While *Condemned 2: Bloodshot* will make an appearance on both next-gen platforms, the PS3 version will make use of the Sixaxis' tilt functionality. To what extent remains unknown, but it's still early, and the devs, of course, remain tight-lipped about much of the game as a whole. As always, though, stay tuned for more. JUSTIN CHENG

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Time Crisis 4

LIGHT-GUNS – WE HOPE TO LOVE 'EM ON PS3, TOO!

PS3	
AVAILABLE	November
TYPE	Shooter
MULTIPLAYER	Yes
ONLINE	No
ESRB RATING	Pending
PUBLISHED BY	Namco Bandai
MADE BY	Namco Bandai

Ever since *Duck Hunt* on the NES, we've been enthralled by light-gun shooters. *Time Crisis 4* kicks this long-standing fascination in to the next generation, and we're peering down the scope at what's to come.

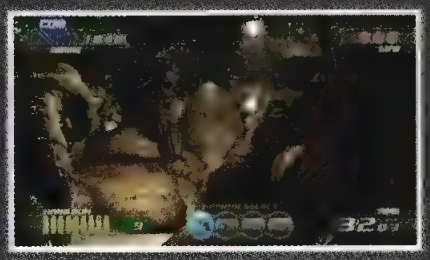
Owners of home editions of *Time Crisis* will recall that the GunCon 2 light-gun only worked on CRT TVs, which was fine for the PS2, but would be a problem for many PS3 owners splashing cash on those big-screen HDTVs. To rectify this, Namco has created the GunCon 3, a new light-gun that is fully compatible with all types of TVs. You place two markers on the TV and that helps triangulate where you're aiming (similar to how the WiiMote functions). Based on the mission we played, the response time and accuracy for the new gun are both very good.

As for the actual game, it looks and feels much like *Time Crisis 3* (with much, much prettier graphics, of course) and includes the same weapon switch system, where pulling the trigger while behind cover changes weapons (from handgun to machine gun to shotgun to grenade launcher).

A new feature is the inclusion of "action points," where you will have to defend a strategic location for a period of time from a multi-pronged attack. Pointing the gun left or right allows you to switch screens and take on enemies attacking from that side. Action points can get pretty hectic and heighten the tension of the already frenetic light-gun action.

TOM HOLOIEN

RPGs Can really ruin your whole day.



DIRT Well, no one will have to dig you a grave.

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago, PS one owners were treated to the first home version of *Time Crisis* and the first GunCon, an impressive piece of tech for the time because it was more accurate than prior light-guns.

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Clive Barker's Jericho

WHERE "GO TO HELL" IS A JOB DESCRIPTION

PS3

AVAILABLE	October
TYPE	FPS
MULTIPLAYER	No
ONLINE	No
ESRB RATING	Pending
PUBLISHED BY	Codemasters
MADE BY	Mercury Steam

It's Hell on Earth... and it's your job to shut it down. As Captain Devin Ross, you must lead your Jericho Squad into the Middle Eastern city of Al-Khali; once a thriving city, now a portal to the Underworld. The Jericho Squad is no simple band of trigger-happy troopers. Every member of the team also brings along a special paranormal power, from simple telekinesis to necromancy and time alteration. And buddy, you're gonna need those powers...

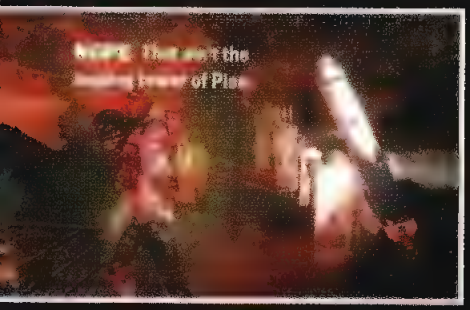
You see, you're not just fighting the city's current occupants... no, that would be too easy. You're going to be transported to several different eras in time on your way to the source of the evil. You'll visit ancient Rome, the Crusades, World War II, and more. Just think of it as "killing time." Yeah, you've got tons of the latest military hardware – sniper rifles, submachine guns, RPGs, flame throwers – but none of it will keep you from dying.

Oh yeah, you die... but that's just the start of the fun. Once you become one of the "dear departed," your soul is free to merge with any of the members of the Jericho Squad, creating hybrid mixes of psychic ability.

UGH! What is that thing?

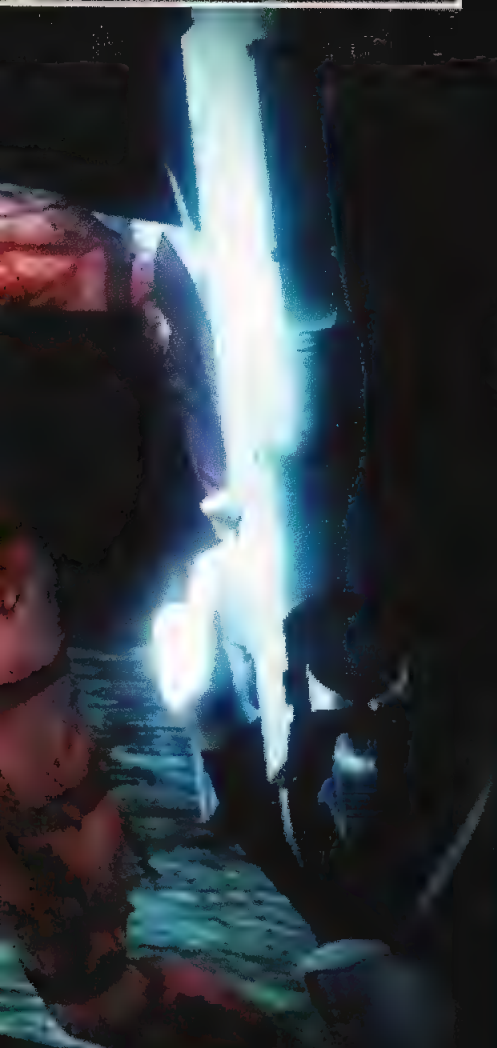
POINTY STICKS Make good shish-kebab.

Biblical Blow-Up The Jericho Team is named after the ancient city of Jericho, which was destroyed by Joshua according to the Bible. His weapon? Sound – by marching around the city for seven days, blowin' trumpets and shouting, he caused the walls of the city to fall.



HOLY WATER Did anyone bring a Super Soaker?

HIGH CALIBER CONFESSION When a wing and a prayer just won't do.



HUH? It's hard to tell what's going on here, but it can't be good.

BLACK MAGIC MAN

Clive Barker was referred to as the "future of horror" by none other than Stephen King. Barker has brought his images of "dark fantasy" to short stories, novels, movies, graphic arts and games. His first game, *Clive Barker's Undying*, was released in 2001 by none other than Electronic Arts.

For example, you could combine Sgt. Delgado's pyromancy skills with Lt. Black's telekinetic abilities to produce a bullet that bursts into flame upon hitting its target. The possibilities are totally endless.

With horror master Clive Barker providing the game's storyline, you can expect all manner of grotesque visions of Hell and its denizens. One indication of Barker's genius: when a body hits the ground, it doesn't just lie there. That would be too... clean. Instead, a buzzing swarm of flies descend on the corpse, devouring it and carrying off the remains. Barker once alluded to himself in an interview as having a "definite fondness for the dark side," and it shows in the hellish monstrosities you'll face in Al-Khali. You can expect flaming, faceless mummies; skeletal Roman legionnaires; long-tongued, skinless, bleeding, throbbing... things that... well, you get the picture. Maybe it's a darn good thing that you're already dead.

The locales featured in the game make the Hell of *Hellraiser 2* look bright and cheery. You can expect everything from tottering Ionic columns to bombed out buildings. The lighting effects will have you dying to get outside into the sun. The game's atmospherics seem perfect.

Aptly scheduled for a Halloween release, the game engine features spontaneous cutscenes that drop you into mini-games that you must win to survive. And you thought being dead was a walk in the park.

We'll send back future reports "from beyond" as soon as we learn any more. **BILL DONOHUE**

10 YEARS OF PSM

Ten Years of Terror What game was keeping us up all night ten years ago? Why, none other than the original *Resident Evil*. With its hungry zombies, mutant attack dogs, carnivorous plants and... uh... really scary voice acting, we were scared... witless.

Battlefield: Bad Company

A DEPARTURE TO DESTRUCTION

PS3	
AVAILABLE	2008
TYPE	Shooter
MULTIPLAYER	Yes
ONLINE	Yes
ESRB RATING	Pending
PUBLISHED BY	Electronic Arts
MADE BY	DICE Sweden

For many, the *Battlefield* series is all about the multiplayer experience. The massive online fragfests are what made the first-person shooter franchise famous, while the single-player aspect has always seemed more of an afterthought...

Until now, that is. *Battlefield Bad Company* promises a unique story and one-of-a-kind characters. Have you ever played a military game that encourages disobeying orders? One in which the heroes are army deserters, more interested in greed than honor? With missions that ask you to invade neutral countries and steal shipments of gold? That's exactly what you'll get to do in *Bad Company*, and it could be a refreshing, if less noble, change of pace.

The solo campaign also promises freedom. The levels will be

VILLA That's a really nice old house... blow it the hell up!

10 YEARS OF PSM

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The level shown in these screens is positively huge – supposedly 400 square miles. That's bigger than many of the world's countries. Good thing the game will have jeeps, tanks, helicopters, boats, and other fun vehicles to get around.

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: Actually, eleven years ago, developer DICE released *True Pinball* on the PS one, which was not reviewed by PSM due to the fact that it was released before the magazine existed.

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CREDIT DUE

The plot of *Battlefield: Bad Company* is a direct homage to the film *Three Kings*, starring George Clooney, Ice Cube, and Mark Wahlberg. Will the videogame heroes also do the right thing by giving away the gold at the end? Let's hope not.

▶ 024 completely nonlinear and open-ended. So, although the mission we tried only had one objective – kill all the soldiers in an outpost base – we could approach it from a seemingly infinite number of angles. After starting at a nearby beach with a jeep, we could choose to follow the dirt roads straight to the front entrance, or crash through the forest to set up a sneakier side attack. We could even take time to explore the wilderness, which often hides secret areas with extra enemies and maybe some extra rewards.

Perhaps most exciting about the *Bad Company* experience, however, is the promise of total destruction. Virtually every building and every object you encounter during your adventures can be reduced to a pile of rubble in seconds. Statues can be shattered, telephone poles toppled, windows broken, walls crumbled, and roofs collapsed. Launch enough grenades or rockets at a sturdy brick house and, when the smoke clears, you'll see nothing more than the smoldering wooden framework. You have an enormous impact on the game world – areas will look dramatically different by the time you're done with them. More ravaged; more destroyed.

Don't think grenades and rockets are your only wrecking tools, either. We also tested tank cannons, artillery, and mortar strikes. Our favorite would have to be the laser-guided missile – use your goggles to select a target and then manually direct the projectile to that target as it plummets toward the Earth below. Just make sure not to accidentally hit yourself.

Of course, "destructible environments" sounds good on the back of a box, but rarely affects – or improves – actual gameplay. Based on our time with *Bad Company*, though, we're hopeful that won't be the case. Everything is affected. If you can't find a way into an enemy fortress, you can make your own way by blowing a hole in the barrier. If a building is swarming with opposition, forget taking them out one by one and just bring the whole building down on top of them. If a tree is blocking your sniping, shoot it down first. If an alarm's noise is calling attention to you, snuff it out. With fewer boundaries, more ideas work.

Will the departure from previous *Battlefield* games work for *Bad Company*? We're happy to see more focus on the single-player experience as long as the multiplayer side is given an equal amount of attention. With so much delicious destruction, it'd be a shame not to take it fully online. CHARLES BARRATT

+ SO QUIET Now that everyone's dead.

PEEKABOO That tank sees you!

BARBECUE Or should that be "curbecue?"

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: Would still be 135 years before the setting of *Battlefield 2142*. Apparently, world peace is still an impossible dream even then.

From The World of Harvest Moon!

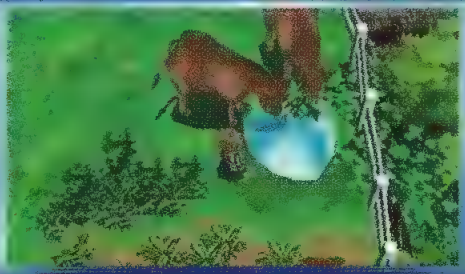
INNOCENT LIFE

A FUTURISTIC HARVEST MOON

Can you work hard and reclaim the land before time runs out?

CULTIVATE FRIENDSHIPS

USE FUTURISTIC TOOLS!



RAISE LIVESTOCK!

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Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights

MORE BIKINI-CLAD MODELS ARE ONLY PART OF THE IMPROVEMENTS

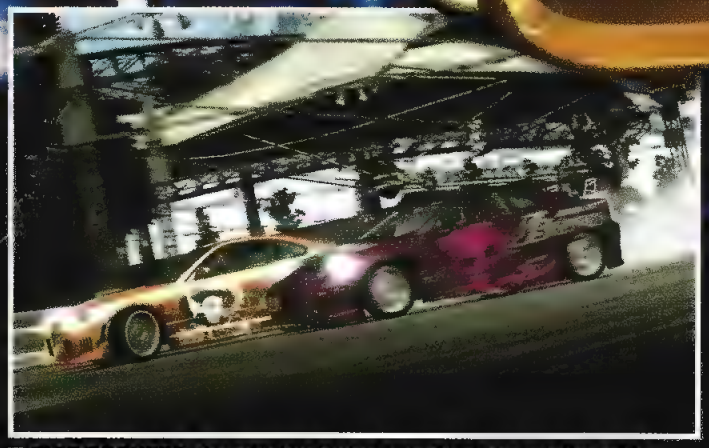
PS3

	September
	Racer
	Yes
	Yes
	Pending
	THQ
	Juice Games

BUILDING BLOCKS

On the surface, *Juiced 2*'s tie-in with Hot Import Nights – an auto show famous for its lavish events and buxom models – looks like your typical T&A affair. Prepare to be blasted by writhing girls in menu backgrounds and models shooting steamy stares at the camera – with all the seduction of a "Got Milk?" poster – in loading screens throughout the game. After making our way past the pole dancing and hip wiggling, we found some genuinely solid drifting and racing action.

The new Drift King mode was the highlight of our hands-on time with an early build of the game, and taking tight corners, à la *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*, felt gratifying. Getting the hang of tapping the brakes and overcompensating your turns to make those tire-screeching twists requires serious practice. Once you get the hang of it, you won't want to stop. The mode's *Tony Hawk*-like scoring system lets you chain your drifts together to multiply your score, and really gives you that itch to replay the tracks over and over to top your last high score.



RICE BURNERS You gotta love it when everything goes up in tire smoke.

Fans familiar with the original *Juiced* should be pleased to know that entry fees, repair costs, and the calendar system – which sometimes left you penniless, waiting for free races – have all been chucked out the window, making the *Juiced 2* experience more about street racing, beating challenges, and building your empire of customized cars than budget management. Yeah!

Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights is scheduled to release this September. When asked what the development team is currently focusing on as the game nears completion, THQ's Ali Bouda replied, "Physics, physics, physics. We're perfecting it and working on getting the A.I. into shape." It'll be exciting to see how the addictive Drift King mode and Juiced Girls measure up against *Sega Rally Revo*'s much talked about mud physics when these racers butt heads this fall.
TYLER NAGATA

GAUDY People actually paint their cars like this?

HOT Nice Camaro... where are all the girls?

FAST Yeah, it's cool. Where are the girls?

HEADLIGHTS Not the kind we had in mind...

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: *Need for Speed II* was released on the PS one. Why aren't there more games these days where you can race exotics? Sure, we like street racing, but sometimes we want to drive a Ferrari.

GIVE ME

REAL FOOTBALL.

EPISODE 2

FOOTBALL RESURRECTED

A SERIES CELEBRATING THE RETURN OF THE GAME. WATCH IT AT

2K SPORTS

ALL-PRO FOOTBALL 2K8

EVERYONE 10+ E 10+ Mild Language ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

THIS SUMMER THE LEGEND RETURNS.

XBOX 360 LIVE PLAYSTATION 3

2K SPORTS

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Sega Rally Revo

GETTING DOWN AND DIRTY WITH SEGA'S WHITE-KNUCKLE RACER

IF YOU WANT MUD You got it.

PS3	
[illegible]LABLE	September
[illegible]	Racing
[illegible]TIPLAYER	Yes
[illegible]LINE	Yes
[illegible]RB RATING	Everyone
[illegible]LISHED BY	Sega
[illegible] BY	Sega Driving Studio

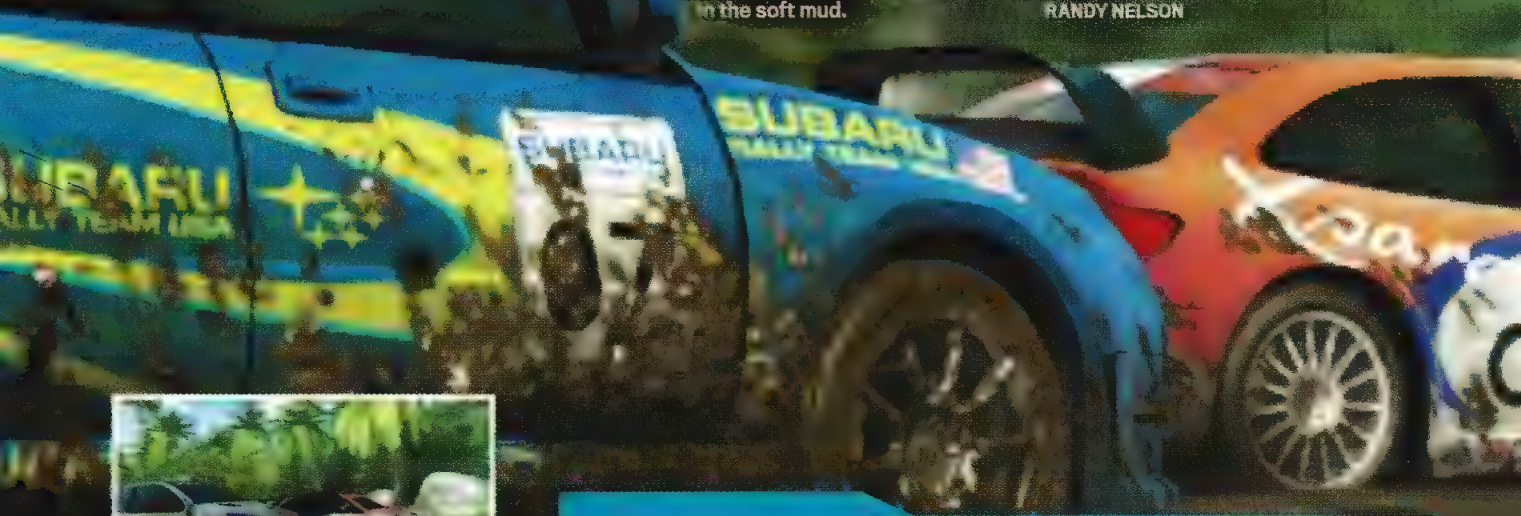
Are you finally finished with *MotorStorm*? Sega's prepped to further fill your off-road racing needs with the latest edition of its classic rally racing series. Developed under tight wraps at its UK-based racing game studio (yep – that's all they do) *Sega Rally Revo* is proving to be more than just a lot of cool-sounding bullet points on a typical fact sheet.

In fact, we were floored – as was the gas pedal – when we finally got to take the game for a spin. The dirt deformation you saw in *MotorStorm* is cranked a couple of notches forward as every car leaves ruts and grooves in the track. Your race strategy then involves avoiding particularly bunched-up patches on each course, which, in close-up, can be seen impacting your car's suspension. Watching mud and dirt cake on our car was also a hoot, but even neater was watching it get washed off as we intentionally drove through standing water. The water then flowed realistically back into the indentations made by our tires in the soft mud.

We also got our first go at an alpine track. Not only did it look amazing as the course evolved from wet pavement to slush to all-out snow, but each leg of the circuit affects your car's handling just as you'd expect.

As it stands, the game is fast, colorful, and more thrill ride than simulation – totally true to its arcade roots. The handling's a tad floaty, and we can't emphasize enough how being able to feel the terrain via rumble would help. Regardless, with a bit of under-the-hood tinkering, this could be another arcade racing great from the company that knows them best.

RANDY NELSON



SPLAT Do it in the dirt.

DIRT Don't track mud in here!

ARCADE GREATS

For the first time in several console generations, Sega's finally able to bring arcade-exact versions of its high-end coin-ops home (case in point: *Virtua Fighter 5*) and create original home games that outclass its best arcade-housed efforts. *Sega Rally Revo* is a good example: It looks far better than *Sega Rally 2*, which, in its quarter-munching form, cost arcade operators many times the price of a PS3.

COSTLY Lend us a quarter?

10 years ago: Sega was a console manufacturer directly in competition with Sony. Now it's making games for its one-time competitor's system, [illegible] racing franchises that it once used to sell gamers on Sega Saturn and [illegible] a decade [illegible]

Burnout Paradise

CRASH, SMASH ANYWHERE YOU WANT

PS3

AVAILABLE
2008
TYPE
Racing
MULTIPLAYER
Yes
ONLINE
Yes
ESRB RATING
Pending
PUBLISHED BY
Electronics Arts
BY
Criterion Games

TWISTED METAL

[illegible] processing power [illegible] intensive [illegible] vehicle [illegible] information [illegible] the cars in *Burnout Paradise* can [illegible] absolutely [illegible] wrecked, far worse than anything you've seen in a *Burnout* before. Doors, windows, [illegible] and [illegible] everywhere wrecked. Luckily, the game allows you to keep driving until your wheels fall off, which is only proper.

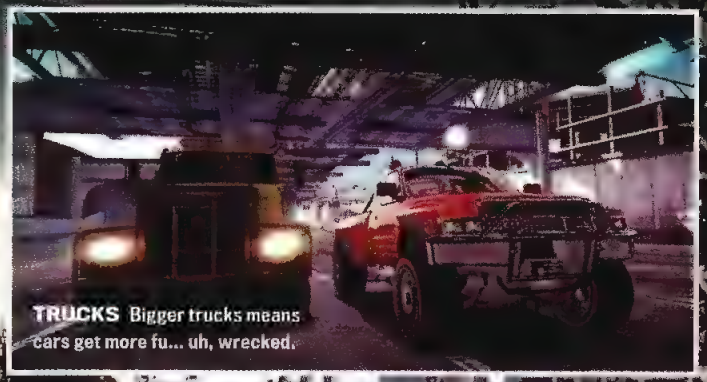
As much as we adore *Burnout*, we had to wonder how much further the series could progress. *Burnout Paradise* shows the ideas still flow, bringing the undeniably fun racing/crashing to the next generation, but also introducing fresh game mechanics.

Chief among these changes (besides the graphical upgrade) is the open world setting. It's developer Criterion's vision of paradise: a world where you can drive anywhere, fly high and proud off convenient ramps, or just crash into other vehicles for the hell of it. A racing game is nothing without races, though, and *Paradise* has plenty – just pull up next to an opponent at a stoplight and press R2 and L2 to initiate a race.

Still, as dynamic as this open world plays out, it doesn't touch the coolness of the seamless online integration. See your friend online? Pause the game and invite him to race without backing out to the main menu. Now you and your friend have a whole world to explore, but more importantly, you have a human rival to crash into. Even better, if you have the PlayStation Eye peripheral, the game takes a snapshot of your reaction right at takedown and sends it to your rival. (Obviously, there's the potential to send obscene gestures and/or nudity to other players, but you wouldn't do that, right?)

Criterion refused to talk about any Crash modes at this time, but we can only imagine what they might have in store. (We're just happy there will actually be some sort of Crash mode, as the previous *Burnout*, *Dominator*, didn't have one.) Regardless, we're fairly certain it'll be fun and exciting. Hey, it's a new *Burnout*, so what's not to get excited about?. JUSTIN CHENG

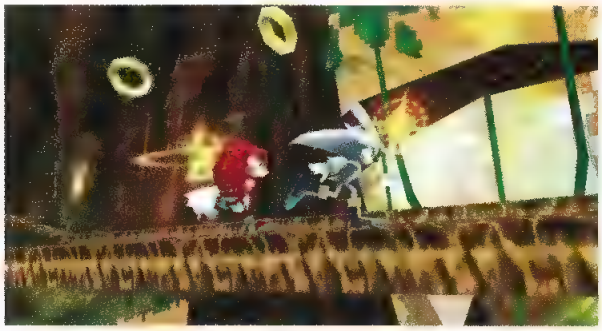
HEAVY DUTY That reinforced grill could be a lifesaver.



TRUCKS Bigger trucks means cars get more fu... uh, wrecked.

10 YEARS OF PSM

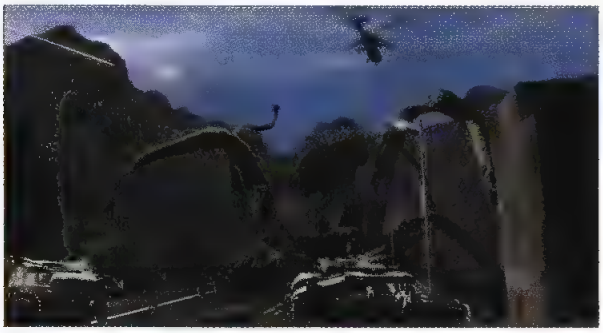
10 years ago: Criterion released *Sub Culture* on PC (its second [illegible] developer's own RenderWare engine. This technology wa[illegible] *Theft Auto III*, *Vice City*, and *San Andreas*.



Sonic Rivals 2

AVAILABLE
Fall
PUBLISHED BY
Sega
MADE BY
Backbone

Sure, most of the recent *Sonic* games have been a bit crap, but we remain cautiously optimistic on the back of fond memories of the little blue hedgehog. Sonic's latest portable outing, *Sonic Rivals 2*, takes its predecessor's fundamental gameplay (race to the finish line) and adds a few more twists and turns, like upgraded power-ups, as well as new characters including Tails and Silver. Plus, you and a friend can play together by sharing only one disc! **JUSTIN CHENG**



BlackSite: Area 51

AVAILABLE
2007
PUBLISHED BY
Midway
MADE BY
Midway Studios Austin

During our most recent look at the game, we were witness to a mash-up of *Starship Troopers* and *Mars Attacks!*, wherein a hokey trailer park is overrun by some very smart and nasty beasts that leapt from doublewide to doublewide, and did their best to cram through a garage window. Perhaps more jarring was witnessing the setting for the first fifth of the game: modern day Iraq. Yep – not what we were expecting either. So far, Midway has got the next-gen cinematic trimmings nailed. The promise of "jump in at any time" online co-op is also good to hear, and has raised our anticipation for this FPS even higher. **RANDY NELSON**

Warriors Orochi

AVAILABLE
September
PUBLISHED BY
Koei
MADE BY
Koei

Like fan fiction made real, *Warriors Orochi* brings both the *Dynasty* and *Samurai Warriors* universes together in one game! Sure, the basic gameplay's the same – you're still cutting a swath through hundreds of enemies – but fresh updates to the fighting system keeps things fresh (you now fight with a three-man group, whose members you can swap at any time, for instance). Plus, you've got a whopping 77 characters from *Dynasty Warriors* and *Samurai Warriors* to choose from! But really, all we needed to hear was "Lu Bu versus Japan" and we were sold. **TOM HOLOIEN**

Dragoneer's Aria

AVAILABLE
August
PUBLISHED BY
NIS America
MADE BY
Hitmaker

Fans of old-school Final Fantasy style RPGs should keep an eye on *Dragoneer's Aria*, a turn-based game of Dragoons and dragons that seems poised to fill the empty spot in the hearts of RPG traditionalists. Visually, *Dragoneer's Aria* is attractive – especially the tasty character designs. However, the combat thus far seems a bit cumbersome. Party-based fights revolve around building mana (through attacking), which you'll use to unleash spells or deploy Battle Skills. You'll have to change "stances," equip Dragon Orbs, and manage magical gems called Lusces. Yes, it's complicated, but it could imply a deep and fulfilling turn-based RPG once the kinks are hammered out. **TERESA DUN**

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MASTER DANGEROUS, HIGH-SPEED STUNTS THROUGH PRECISION DRIVING.
AMP UP THE ACTION BY IMPROVISING RECKLESS MANEUVERS.
BATTLE RIVAL STUNTMEN ON THE FILM SETS AND BACKLOT MULTIPLAYER ARENAS.
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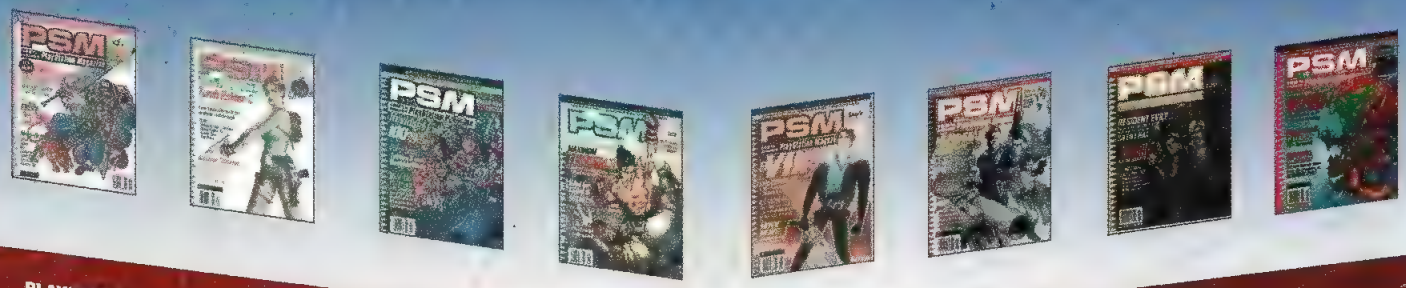
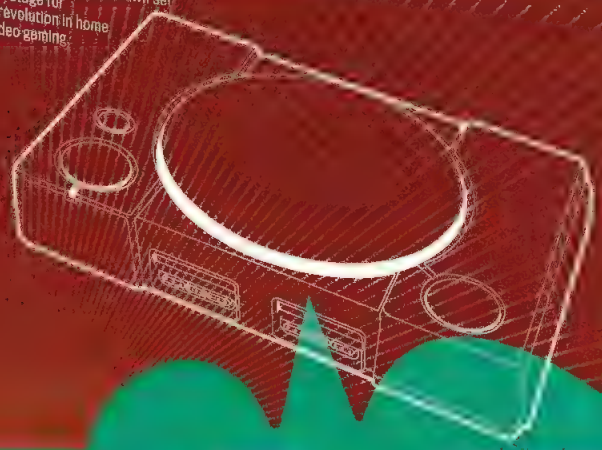
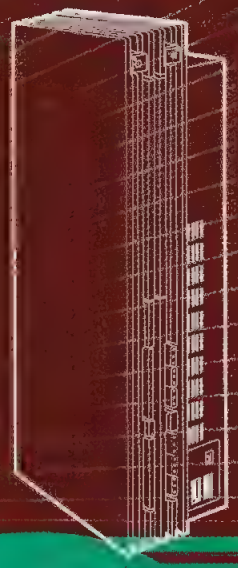
インデペンデント・プレイステーション・マガジン 創立十周年



PLAYSTATION Introduced in the last century, the PS one as it is now quaintly known set the stage for a revolution in home video gaming.



PS2 Breaking the mainstream barrier propelled Sony in to a seemingly unassailable lead in the market. As of 3/31/07 117.89 million PS2s have sold throughout the world, over 47 million of those in the U.S.



10 Years of PlayStation

Through the Eyes of PSM

プレイステーション

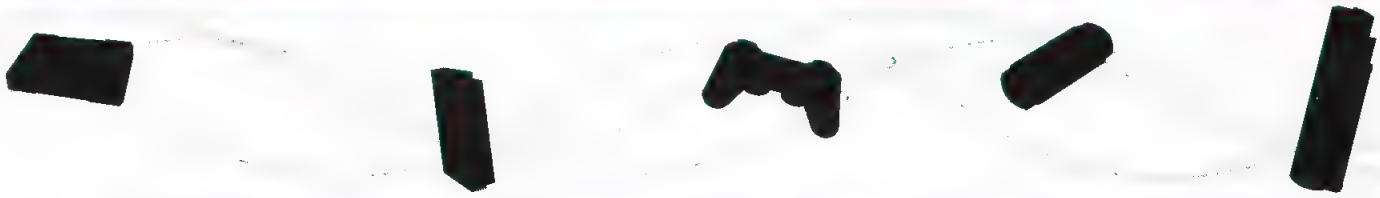
In the Beginning The first few issues of PSM were actually created in a separate office from the rest of Future's games magazines. It featured full disco lighting; the original incarnation of Chris Slate featured a goatee. He was later sold on eBay. We still have the disco-ball.

PSP Introduced in March 2005, the PlayStation Portable delivered PS2 gaming on the go, along with full media center capabilities and features that are improving to this day.

PS3 The gateway to the next generation of home entertainment – hi-def graphics, Blu-ray, free online access, and curing cancer all packed in to one sleek black box.

How and why gaming changed forever

By Randy Nelson



"PlayStation games are boring and silly. It's also not very sea-worthy."

–Nintendo President Hiroshi Yamauchi during a 1997 shareholder's meeting

WHEN PSM FIRST HIT NEWSSTANDS IN AUGUST 1997, it was already clear how very, very wrong the then president of the Big N was. Of course, no one was certain that the first-time videogame console effort from the company best known for the Walkman would have what it took to stand up to – let alone take down – the company that had become synonymous with gaming since the late 1980s. By the time issue one of PSM had left the printer, however, we knew it was here to stay (and was already making Sega's life miserable). We set out on our mission to create a new type of magazine worthy of a new type of gamer on a new type of system. In other words, a mag for hardcore gamers who had outgrown 8- and 16-bit and had flocked to a machine that took them seriously.

Alongside the PlayStation itself, PSM has gone on to invite more types of gamers to the party. We've been there as the PS family of systems has, one-by-one, been the debut platform for many of the most beloved and influential games of the past decade – the games we love, and the games the "other guys" clamor for.

It's been a truly amazing ride. For this 10th anniversary of the magazine, we considered a lot of possible ways to celebrate. In the end, though, we decided that rather than simply pat our own collective backs for sticking around so long, we'd condense 10 years (and then some) of our take on PlayStation into not just the next eight pages, but the entire issue.

Here, though, you'll find the pure, condensed, definitive PSM take on PlayStation. From the not-so-amicable split that started it all to the way it changed gaming as a whole. So join us as we tear down memory lane – and don't be surprised if you learn a new thing or two (or three, or four, or more...) along the way!

PLAYSTATION'S DEFINING MOMENTS

10 YEARS OF PSM

PLAYSTATION SEPTEMBER 9, 1995 MASCOT: A DOMINATRIX. SERIOUSLY.

DUALSHOCK CONTROLLER MAY 12, 1998 SIXAXIS DE-SHOCKED MAY 8, 2006

PLAYSTATION 2 OCTOBER 26, 2000 MUGGINGS RISE ACROSS U.S.

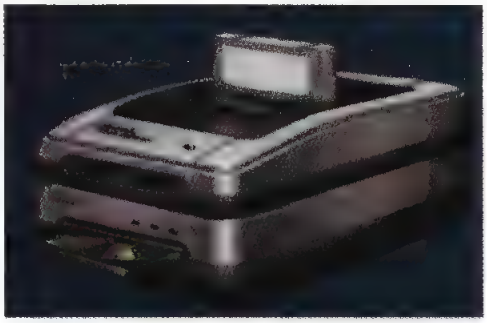
PSP MARCH 24, 2005 BESONE. HANDHELD GAMING GHETTO

PLAYSTATION 3 NOVEMBER 11, 2006 FIVE HUNDRED NINETY-NINE U.S. DOLLARS

1 Nintendo and Sony fall out: PlayStation is born

The origins of the PlayStation can actually be traced back to 1986. Nintendo was looking for its own mass storage solution to put it on par with NEC's PC-Engine CD and the competing Sega Mega CD formats.

Rising star chip designer KEN KUTARAGI had been pitching his design for a cutting-edge digital signal processor (DSP) sound chip to Nintendo for use in the Super Famicom (Super NES to us in the U.S.). Around the same time, Sony and Phillips were collaborating on the CD audio and CD-ROM formats, so Nintendo, impressed by Kutaragi, entered into a legally binding contract with Sony to create a CD-ROM drive for its 16-bit console. As part of the agreement, Sony would produce its own game system combining the SNES and SNES CD technology (cartridge and CD-ROM) to be called the Sony Play Station.



PHILIPS

In the weeks leading up to the SNES CD's unveiling, Nintendo's lawyers discovered that the legal agreement they'd signed gave Sony complete control over any CD-ROM games produced for the SNES CD. In what has to be one of the nastiest moves in Japanese corporate history, Nintendo secretly met with Sony's partner in the CD format, Phillips, to have them produce the SNES CD instead.

The day before Sony and Nintendo's SNES CD unveiling in June of 1991, Sony was showing off its Play Station system to the media. The next day, Nintendo of America's president, Howard Lincoln, took to the stage at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago and announced the SNES CD... from PHILLIPS.

Sony and Ken Kutaragi were obviously stunned. Months of legal battles followed. Sony eventually scrapped the Play Station project and instead set out to develop its own proprietary games console, simply called PlayStation, aimed at taking on the company that had dishonored them.

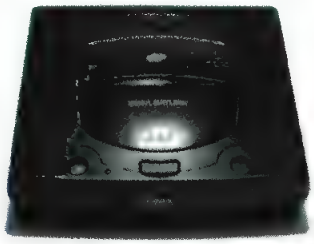
So, if it weren't for some legalese and back room dealings, PlayStation as we know it would never have existed. Of course, the system went on to utterly trounce Nintendo's N64, just as the PS2 outsold the GameCube by a vast margin.

KEN KUTARAGI

1986
> Ken Kutaragi pitches Nintendo on Sony sound chip for SNES; companies establish working relationship.
> *Dragon Quest* released for Famicom (NES), launching Japan's most popular RPG franchise.

2 Sega's Saturn stumbles out of the gate

Despite launching well ahead of PlayStation and building on the good will and success of the Genesis, the SEGA SATURN faced an uphill struggle against Sony's first console offering almost from day one. For one, it was more expensive (it launched in May 1995 at $399; PLAYSTATION hit just three months later at $299) It was also designed around being a very powerful 2D machine, whereas the PlayStation, from day one, had been envisioned as the first fully 3D home console. When PlayStation hit shelves in September of 1995, gamers saw that it was not only priced more competitively than Sega's console, but also offered a better looking, better sounding game experience.



1995
> Sega launches Saturn on May 11, three months earlier than planned to get a jump on PlayStation.
> Sony announces $299 price for PlayStation, $100 less than Saturn.
> PlayStation launches on September 9, sells faster than any previous games console.
> The film Hackers is released in theaters (the movie features *WipEout*).
> The first Mortal Kombat movie is released in theaters (still one of the best videogame movies).

this WORLD ain't BIG ENOUGH for YOU and BAD GUYS.

Long ago folks here had fancy technology.
Then they just up and left it all behind.
Later interlopers came and took your land.
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PLAYSTATION 2017

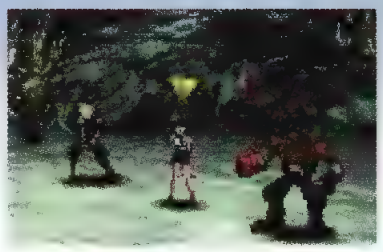
The future – or at least our version of it – today!

"I wake up and reach for the PS5 controller on my nightstand. With the press of a button, my bedroom TV turns on and I'm looking at a screen divided into four. In one corner, I see the day's news headlines. Next to that, a grimace-inducing update that Justin has earned five trophies more than me in just as many games overnight. Looking to the left, I'm reminded that Naughty Dog's latest game is being released today, and it's in stock at my nearest game shop. "Taking the controller with me into the living room, my main set turns on automatically, and from a pop-up menu, I check my mail. A message pops up on-screen to let me know that new levels for *God of War 6* and *Grand Theft Auto: The World Stories* have been downloaded while I slept. I jump into *Resistance: Rise of Machines* to try out a new weapon when a pop-up informs me that PSM EIC Justin Cheng wants to video chat. I accept, and my bearded, eye-patched boss comes on-screen, thanks to his HD EyeToy. 'Randy! You're two hours late for work!' he bellows. 'That's okay,' I say. 'Check this out!' I see his shocked expression as his screen informs him that I've just bested his supposedly unbeatable lap time in *Gran Turismo Online* by three whole seconds. By the time he can react, I've put my system into standby mode and am on my way to the kitchen, playing *GT Online* on my PSP2 before I head into the office."

RANDY NELSON

3 Square jumps ship, sells systems

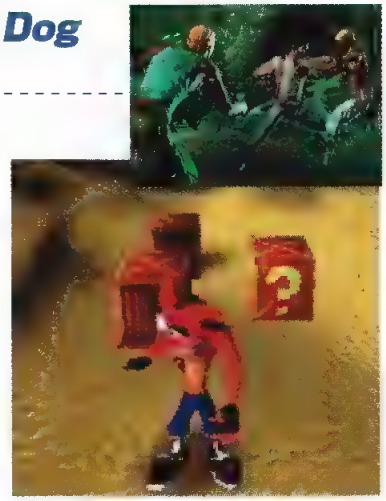
It's taken for granted these days that Square Enix's games are larger than life – packed with breathtaking CGI cinematics and, in many cases, fully voice-acted. Not to mention they're absolutely huge. So when planning its first *Final Fantasy* title since the good old 16-bit days, the developer – then known simply as Squaresoft – faced with dilemma if it were to stick exclusively with Nintendo hardware. Namely, the NINTENDO 64, with its relatively low-capacity, high-cost cartridge format for games. The other option – PlayStation's CD-ROM format – boasted the storage space and audio capabilities that were just what Square was after. We're certain some money also changed hands, but the end result was that Sony got one of its very first system-sellers in the form of FINAL FANTASY VII (see p.52 (Square Circle) for more on the *FFVII* influence).



1996
- The price of the PlayStation is dropped from $299 to $199.
- *Resident Evil* is released on the PlayStation.
- Nintendo releases Nintendo 64 on September 29; first console with mip-mapping and texture filtering.

4 A wise choice: Naughty Dog wooed to PlayStation

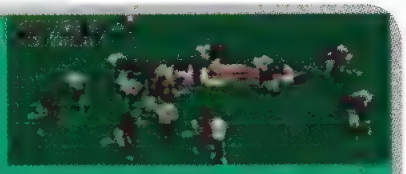
It's a little-known fact that the PlayStation platforming showpiece CRASH BANDICOOT was originally planned for release on the short-lived 3DO console. Developer Naughty Dog had already released its fighting game, *Way of The Warrior*, for the ill-fated platform, and was working on *Crash* when then head of SCEA third-party relations – and future Sega of America president – Bernie Stolar approached them about developing *Crash Bandicoot* exclusively for PlayStation instead. A deal was struck, and the rest, as they say, is history – history that saw SCEA eventually buy the immensely talented Naughty Dog studio outright, spawn the *Jak* games, and the upcoming PS3 stunner UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE.



1997
- Unofficially "inspired" by N64's controller, Sony releases the first Dual Analog controller for PlayStation (8/27)
- *Final Fantasy VII* is released in the U.S.
- Nintendo releases the Rumble Pack for the N64.
- PSM is born!
- *GoldenEye 007* is released for the N64.

Oops!

It hasn't always been smooth sailing in the world of PlayStation. Here's a look at some of the more notable flops, duds, and just plain "WHAT?" moments.



THE YEAR WITHOUT MADDEN

Yes, there was a time when *Madden* wasn't the only football game in town. Following its huge success on Sega Genesis, the series was being readied for a 32-bit debut in the first year of the original PlayStation. Little did Electronic Arts know, however, that Sony's own internal sports team was hard at work on its own NFL title: *GameDay*, unlike *Madden*, which featured old-fashioned 2D sprite players, *GameDay*'s were fully 3D, and the game looked a hell of a lot better for it. After seeing what they were up against, EA decided to shelve the series for that season, letting go many of the development staff... who later went on to create the excellent *MLB 2K* series.

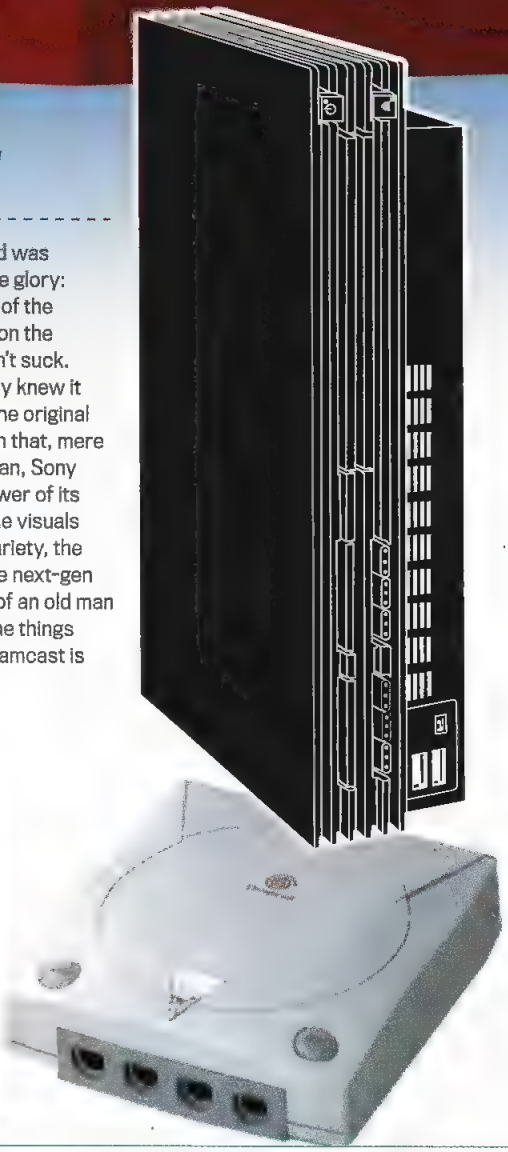
PS2'S HDD

A lot of the network stuff we have now was originally promised for the PS2. In fact, before the system went on sale in October 2000, Sony execs were making no bones about the fact that PS2 would soon get a broadband adapter and turn this dream, finally, the HDD only lasted several years into PS2's lifespan, and none of the grand e-distribution plans touted from one E3 to another ever materialized. Few games used the HDD, and, to this day, they can be found bundled with *Final Fantasy XI* for the price of a stand-alone PS2 game.

5 PlayStation 2's unveiling: perfect timing

1998
- *Resident Evil 2* released.
- *Gran Turismo* released.
- The DualShock controller is released in the U.S.
- The PlayStation version of *Grand Theft Auto* is released.
- *Metal Gear Solid* released.
- *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* (N64) released.

In the later months of 1998, the gaming world was abuzz with talk about Sega's return to console glory: THE DREAMCAST. Finally, it would be ahead of the curve with the first next-generation console on the market, with a lineup of games that, well, didn't suck. As promising as the DC looked, however, Sony knew it had fostered a cache of hardcore fans with the original PlayStation. So, it was with surgical precision that, mere weeks before Dreamcast went on sale in Japan, Sony held a press conference to showcase the power of its newest creation: PLAYSTATION 2. Though the visuals were definitely of the "best case scenario" variety, the demos shown by SCEI – including a prototype next-gen GRAN TURISMO and a photorealistic model of an old man ostensibly from the forthcoming *Final Fantasy* movie – became things of legend, spreading from the internet to word of mouth: "Dreamcast is already doomed."



6 Metal Gear Solid 2 proves the hype

2000
- PlayStation 2 launched.
- Bill Gates announces plans for the Xbox at Game Developers Conference.
- *MGS2* trailer premieres at Universal Studios.

Fancy tech demos aside, the first actual games for PS2 weren't anything to write home about. Where had all that power and promise gone? The answer came in May of 2000 when, before a packed screening room at Universal Studios, HIDEO KOJIMA gave a simple speech and rolled what is inarguably the greatest game trailer ever produced. From the establishing shot, the trailer for METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY had the assembled media saying "That has to be pre-rendered!" and "There's no way a real game can look like that!" A short time later, still buzzing from the sheer majesty that was a seemingly very real, in-game trailer, the press got what they wanted, but weren't expecting: confirmation from Kojima that everything they'd just seen, aside from a CGI snow transition, was being produced by the PS2. From that point forward, everyone took Sony's claims a *lot* more seriously.

10 YEARS OF PSM

HOW OLD WAS CHRIS SLATE WHEN HE WAS LAUNCH EDITOR OF PSM?

WHAT YEAR AND MONTH WAS RANDY'S FIRST OFFICIAL ISSUE ON STAFF?

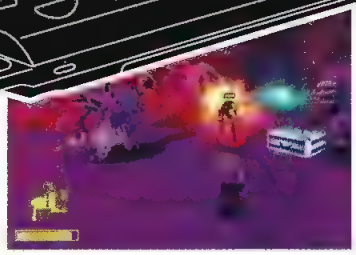
HOW MANY ISSUES WAS JUSTIN AN INTERN BEFORE BEING HIRED FULL-TIME?

WHAT ISSUE SAW THE FIRST SIGHTING OF THE 800LB GORILLA?

SEND THE ANSWERS TO EDITOR@PSMONLINE.COM TO WIN... SOME STUFF.

7 The PSP announced, jaws drop

In the years leading up to E3 2003, the editors of PSM had many a lunchtime conversation about what it would be like if – and what it would take to ensure – a true handheld PlayStation became a reality. Our questions were answered when, in an uncommon move, then SCEI president Ken Kutaragi took to the stage in May of '03 to introduce a new, smaller member of the PlayStation family, THE PSP (or PlayStation Portable). The soundstage at Sony's L.A. Center Studios, where the press event was taking place, was electrified with awe and excitement. In fact, cliché as it may sound, our jaws had literally dropped. UMD, widescreen, PS2 quality graphics; Sony was going to do to Game Boy what it'd done to Nintendo's consoles. At least that's what we dreamed at the time. DEATH JR. was the first game shown.



2003
- *The Getaway* released. Rob – while EIC at *PC Gamer* – actually goes and buys a copy. Sucker.
- *Devil May Cry 2* released. (Actually, let's forget that one.)
- Square and Enix merge to form... Square Enix.
- The EyeToy released.

8 First PS3 game footage – too good to be true

Ratcheting the impact up several steps from what it'd done with the PlayStation 2's technology unveiling, Sony used its E3 2005 press conference to roll out footage of actual games in development for the PlayStation 3. It was a huge deal: not only was this the first time we were seeing a prototype of the system itself, but actual games! The trailers hit one after another like AAA-bombs. What we saw looked like Hollywood grade CGI in real time. There was no doubt about it: PS3 was the real deal. It was going to make every other piece of 3D graphics producing technology on the planet obsolete... or so we were inclined to believe. Leaving the press briefing, the buzz was tremendous. We darted back to our hotel room and watched our videotape of the trailers of KILLZONE for what seemed like a hundred times straight. This was amazing. In the following months, the truth came out: most, if not all, of what we'd seen was simply conceptual CGI footage. PS3 eventually launched with some of the games shown at the briefing, but they came up shy of the mark set by the CGI. We're just happy that SCEA chose to forego such footage at subsequent events.

2005
- *Resident Evil 4* released.
- EA signs a 15-year deal with ESPN.
- *Devil May Cry 3* released. Dante's back!
- *God of War* released.
- PSP launched.
- Hackers find way to run homebrew apps on the PSP.
- Xbox 360 launched.

Then and Now: The PlayStation Controller

It's something we take for granted: the design of the PlayStation gamepad. After all, the Dual Shock 2 is pretty much the best controller in feel and function ever, but do you recall the original PS pad? Going back to it now, it feels small and light – maybe a little too small. Granted, it was designed with a typical Japanese gamer in mind, which was also evident in the fact that the cord on the very first pads was only about three feet long (who'd need more in a tight living space?).

Subsequent revisions saw the first dual analog version, which was significantly larger and had really awful extremely concave stick tops. The original model of this design also boasted vibration... which literally felt like a pager buzzing in your hands. Fortunately, Sony went back to the design team and had them rework it into the beloved Dual Shock form factor. This was further refined for the Dual Shock 2, which shipped with PS2, to include springier sticks and analog buttons. Now with the Sixaxis, we have the most refined design, with much more accurate analog sticks and wireless built-in. Of course, the lack of vibration feedback is still a major shortcoming, but we wouldn't be surprised if a Sixaxis Shock were announced right around the time you read this.

9 PS3 sticker price shocks the world

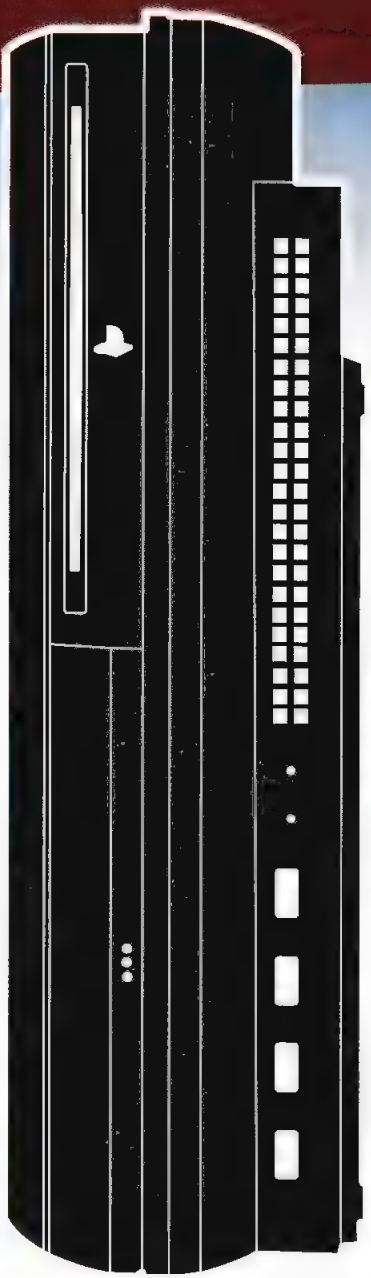
2006
> *Tomb Raider: Legend* released. Lara's back!
> At E3, Sony announces the price for the PS3. Gamers weep.
> *Okami* released. No one buys it. We weep.
> *Final Fantasy XII* released.
> *Guitar Hero II* released.
> PS3 launched.
> Nintendo Wii launched.

One year after its too-good-to-be-true PS3 trailer festival, Sony trotted out actual PS3 game footage for the press at its pre-E3 2006 media briefing. The gathered journalists were already leery from the events of a year prior, and when they saw that – with a few exceptions – the actual PS3 games looked only marginally better (and, in some cases, worse) than the competition's, things looked... meh. The final blow came when now SCEI head Kaz Hirai jubilantly revealed – just as the conference was wrapping up – that the fully-featured (and now only) PS3 model would retail for... $599 U.S. dollars. We could almost feel everyone's brains in the packed room short-circuiting. $200 more than the launch price of PS2 – it's an issue that SCEA is still haranguing a wary consumer with to this day, and will hopefully address before the year is out.

10 Home: Sony changes social gaming

2007
> Nintendo and Sega announce Mario and Sonic At the Olympic Games.
> *God of War II* released.
> Xbox 360 Elite launched.
> *Manhunt 2* receives AO (adults only) rating.

More significant than any game announcement it had made in years, SCEA wowed the gathered attendees at its Game Developers Conference 2007 keynote with the unveiling of Home: a virtual world that players enter in order to interact with each other and participate in online gaming. Much more than the admittedly well-designed Xbox Live service, Home is poised to literally change the way we look at interaction with other gamers. It's one thing to talk about the power of your game system's hardware, but it's thinking like that behind Home that really reinforces the idea that Sony isn't simply resting on its laurels. It's trying something very different, and, from what we've experienced of it so far, truly exciting.



What If: PS3 were released in 1997?

There's been plenty of noise about the sticker price for the PS3, but we did some number crunching to see roughly how much a game console with as much power would have cost back when PSM's first issue went on sale.

Just based on mathematical computing power alone, the answer's astounding. PS3's CELL processor is capable of a maximum of 204 billion FLOPS (204 GFLOPS), or *"floating point" [mathematical calculation] operations per second*. To create a computing cluster capable of that much number-crunching prowess in 1997 required two PCs, each with 16 Pentium Pro processors. Total cost: $30,000.

For contrast, the original PlayStation's CPU could muster just about 33 million calculations per second. Add in its 500B of HDD storage and MSX processor and PS3 would have been considered a leading-edge supercomputer when PSM was born.

10 GAMES THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

CANNED COVER GAMES

Not all of the games that have graced the front of the mag over the past 10 years actually made it on to shelves. Here's a rundown of the letdowns.

WCW MAYHEM (PS2)

This was one of our very first looks at a PS2 game being developed outside of Japan. Not only did the game never see the light of day, but a printing error resulted in the cover background being purely silver; it was originally intended to look like silver fog behind Goldberg. D'oh!

WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2008 (PS3)

We're not sure what it is with PSM and wrestling game covers, but despite the fact that the very first WWE game on PS3 was looking amazing, and Justin had cranked out a whopper of a preview for it, publisher THQ decided to can it rather than release what they felt would be a rushed product.

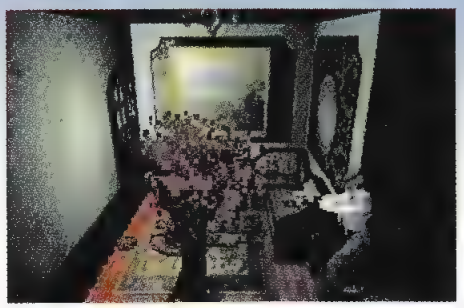
SAINTS ROW (PS3)

THQ's *Grand Theft Auto* play/look-alike made quite a splash on the Xbox 360, so when we got the chance to have an exclusive first look at what promised to be an even better PS3 version, we jumped at the chance. Unfortunately for us, but fortunately for you, the developer later decided to simply focus on bringing the sequel to the game to PS3 instead.

The Tech That Changed Everything

Sony's decision to make PS3 a Blu-ray disc player was controversial from the outset. In a format war that was still to be fought on the retail and mindshare battlefield, the expensive upgrade pushed the core console price into the stratosphere. The benefits simply weren't that apparent at the outset. More storage capacity than HD-DVD? Big deal. No launch game – or probably any in the first 18 months – would really take advantage of the capacity advantage.

But we sense that tide turning. With standalone Blu-ray players priced at $500 minimum, plenty of movies hitting the format, and the true potential still to be unleashed, this tech that caused such consternation could be at the heart of a burgeoning future. Could be...

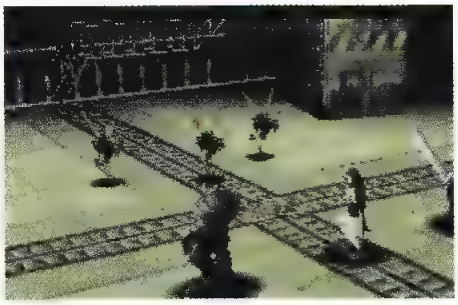


RESIDENT EVIL 1996

Claim to Fame: Established its own genre – Survival Horror – and introduced gameplay and presentation conventions seen in many other horror and non-horror titles that followed.

TOMB RAIDER 1996

Claim to Fame: Essentially created the modern third-person action-adventure, ensured that hot female lead characters would be the "in" thing for anyone hoping to get their original game noticed from that point forward. Added "spelunking" to the gamer's lexicon.



FINAL FANTASY VII 1997

Claim to Fame: Ushered in the modern era of console roleplaying with its groundbreaking CGI cinematic sequences and a combat system that has been outright lifted by countless RPGs that followed.

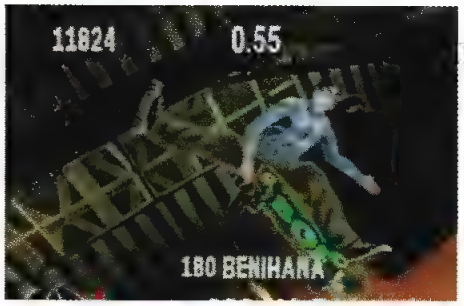
PARAPPA THE RAPPER 1997

Claim to Fame: Arguably created the rhythm game genre with its button-specific, timing-based gameplay. Games such as *DDR* and even *Guitar Hero* owe a debt of gratitude to it and its sequel, *Um Jammer Lammy*. Even the *God of War* and *Tomb Raider* series have been influenced by it with their timing/button-based action sequences.

METAL GEAR SOLID 1998

Claim to Fame: Set the new standard for movie-like presentation and dialog in videogames and introduced 3D stealth gameplay that would be copied by spy- and non-spy games alike.

GRAN TURISMO 1998
Claim to Fame: Set the bar for realism in console racing games and elevated the race replay to an art form in and of itself that other developers are still trying to match to this day.



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 1999
Claim to Fame: Brought skateboarding to the masses and introduced gameplay mechanics that would be copied by the hordes of other extreme sports games that followed in its wake.

DEVIL MAY CRY 2001
Claim to Fame: Rejuvenated the all-out third person action game. Its camera system, play mechanics, and in some cases even its aesthetics have influenced numerous other games.

GRAND THEFT AUTO III 2001
Claim to Fame: Introduced the concept of a constantly running, living game world and do-anything sandbox gameplay... and it had hookers.

GUITAR HERO 2005
Claim to Fame: More than any other series that began its life on PlayStation, it has earned the distinction of being the ultimate multiplayer party game.

Games of the Year

Our top picks from every PSM 10 [illegible]

1997 [illegible] Symphony [illegible] Night
1998 Meta[illegible] Solid
1999 Ape [illegible]
2000 SSX
2001 Meta[illegible] Solid 2: Son[illegible] Liberty
2002 Gran[illegible] Auto: Vice Cr[illegible]
2003 Jak II
2004 Meta[illegible] Solid 3: Snak[illegible]
2005 God [illegible]
200[illegible]

news

ABSENCE MAKES THE HEART GROW FONDER DEPT.

10 YEARS OF PSM

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

A look back into the depths of time to rediscover the games we loved and to ask the question: **why don't these games exist today?** BY BILL DONOHUE

BUY THE BUNNY!

Well, it's not quite next-gen Robbit, but it's pretty damn close. Fans of the brazen bunny can now download the original *Jumping Flash!* for use on their PS3 and PSP systems. I have no idea if the graphics have been sharpened up, but it's all about the gameplay anyway. It's only $5.99 at the PlayStation Store, so hop on over and check it out!

Jumping Flash!

The golden words would fly straight at you from an infinite pool of stars: EXACT and ULTRA. What did these words mean? Was it important? Who knew? What was important was the game you'd just embarked upon: a cartoon-like tale of theft and greed, and completely insane, gravity defying jumps. The game was *Jumping Flash!* and it was damn near the Best... Game... Ever.

The storyline was simple: Baron Aloha, something of a Hunter S. Thompson look-alike, had cut huge chunks out of a peaceful planet to serve as his private refuge. Only one hero had the cajones to foil the evil Baron and return the planetary pieces to their rightful owner: a full metal bunny named Robbit.

It was neither the storyline nor the colorful graphics that drew us in. It was the gameplay, pure and simple. A mix of first-person shooter, platformer, and puzzle game, *Jumping Flash!* had one special ingredient: the ability to move in all three dimensions via Robbit's hyper-jumping ability. You could launch yourself straight up into the blue not once, not twice, but three times in a single effort, resulting in vertigo-inducing views.

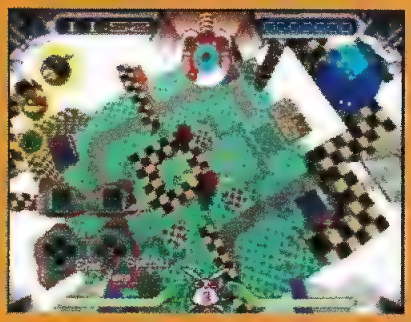
The goals were simple: retrieve four carrot-shaped rocket pods that were hidden (often in the most out of the way places imaginable) around the Dali-esque landscapes, and then make your way to the exit. It sounds easy, but bizarre creatures stymied your endeavor: walking hamburgers, bomb-dropping ducks, missile-firing dogs (at least I think they were dogs...), laser-firing spiders, huge mosquitoes, and many others equally as strange.

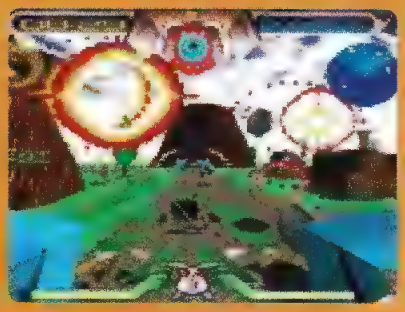
Fighting back not only gave a sense of satisfaction, but often resulted in interesting and useful items, such as assorted fireworks, extra time, free time, and the psychedelic Power Capsule. Your primary weapon was Robbit's double guns, but grenades and laser beams rounded out the arsenal. Of course, in a moment of combat-induced panic, you could always just bounce on your enemy's head until it exploded.

The simple fact is that *Jumping Flash!* and its sequel were just plain fun to play. There's something inherently joyful in jumping and

> "REMEMBER WHEN YOU WERE A KID, **JUMPING UP AND DOWN ON YOUR BED** – IT'S LIKE THAT."

How High Is High? By using the missiles fired by the red, missile-firing dogs, it's possible to take Robbit to his highest possible altitude, where he'll simply stop ascending. It will take 13 seconds for Robbit to fall back to the lowest point of the level.





HUNGRY? You can't quite see it from here (the view is marvelous, though), but there are huge eggs frying in that pan over there. Yum!

sailing hundreds of feet into the air, searching for rocket pods. Remember when you were a kid, jumping up and down on your bed – it's like that. When I first started, I'd find myself standing up out of my chair every time I jumped. Couldn't help it... didn't care. It was fun!

So why hasn't Sony seen fit to bring Robbit and the evil Baron Aloha into the current gen of consoles (Oops! They have... kind of. Check out the Buy the Bunny boxout)? There are no other current PS3 titles that compare to the gameplay. If you won't bring *Jumping Flash!* to PS3, how about creating a game based on Robert Heinlein's book, *Starship Troopers*? Strangely enough, the gameplay exhibited in *Jumping Flash!* is exactly like the heavily-armored mobile infantry combat described in the book (I mean the book; not the cheesy, Hollyweird FX movie of the same name). In the book, Earth's Mobile Infantry fall from orbit in pods, and then parachute onto the enemy's planet. They engage in combat by hopping from building to tall building, all the while dropping mines, grenades and firing their laser rifles. Does that sound just a little familiar?

Get with it, Sony. Give us our *Jumping Flash!* or give us Heinlein's vision of future combat!

Second Verse... Same As The First!

Jumping Flash! 2 was released just eight months after the original title. While it didn't change the formula much, if at all, the game was so much fun that fans didn't care. After all, Robbit rules! PUB: Sony DEV: Exact RELEASE: August, 1996

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Old school goodness for your PS3 at the PlayStation Network Store.

WIPEOUT Score: 9.1/10 $5.99
Incredible vertigo-inducing racing action from the future!

DESTRUCTION DERBY
Score: 7/10 $5.99
Why race 'em when it's so much fun to just wreck 'em?

COOL BOARDERS Score: 4/5 $5.99
Long before there was an *SSX*, there was *Cool Boarders*.

TEKKEN 2 Score: 9.1/10 $5.99
This early fighter's nickname was "The Office Work Stopper."

Check your PlayStation Network Store for other old school titles!

10 YEARS OF PSM

Ancient Age While not a PlayStation game by any means, the *Super Bomberman 2* cartridge at Bill's house was first placed in his SNES back in 1996... and it's stayed there ever since. Bill does have a back-up copy of the game just in case of a catastrophic failure.

The DVD war is won and Blu-ray is the victor, so says Blockbuster (see sidebar). Now that's clear, what movies are hitting stores that should pique your interest?

BLU-RAY CENTRAL

PSM Pick of the Month

APOCALYPTO

Rated: R

We're stepping out on a limb for the inaugural pick for PSM Blu-ray disc of the month... but there's method in the madness. Mel Gibson's spectacular portrayal of Mayan civilization is a fascinating story in itself, filled with gripping scenes as the young Jaguar Paw races through the jungle settings.

What stands out, however, is the visual vibrancy of virtually every scene. Stunning hues erupt at every turn and the painted faces jump from the screen as seeing the fine detail delivered in this high-resolution format really illustrates its true colors. This is how you can show off your high definition setup.

The movie? Yeah, it's entertaining, mainly because its style is so unique. The extras include a commentary (so-so), and deleted scene with commentary (interesting), and a making of short (pretty good). Blu-ray for us is about clearly illustrating the upgrade in visual fidelity that it offers over standard definition DVD programming, and here *Apocalypto* is a fine showcase. **Movie: 8 / Features: 7.5**

Wild Things: Unrated Edition

Rated: Unrated

C'mon, the winner of the MTV movie award for Best Kiss has to be a take home and keep winner, right? Especially when that kiss was Denise Richards (the former Mrs. Charlie Sheen) and Neve Campbell. This version has a few added scenes, and to answer the important question, yes, it does seem like the scene in the pool is a little longer. Worth the investment? Depends totally on your hot factor rating for Misses Richards and Campbell (or Mr. Bacon and Dillon). **Movie: 6 / Features: 0.0 (or none)**

Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest

Rated: PG13

Since the review above focused on Depp, then this must mention the sensational Keira Knightley. Oh, so she'll have better performances, we're sure, but has she looked better in a movie (answers to the usual email address, and bonus points for extolling the brilliance of *Love Actually*)?

Only eight hours of bonus features make the cut on this two-disc set, but with the fun Liar's Dice game (a bar favorite), and more refined commentaries, this has plenty of value in its $30 package. **Movie: 7 / Features: 8**

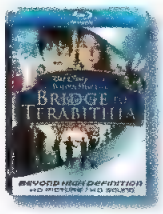
Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl

Rated: PG13

Interesting background to the *Pirates* movies was the studio's initial shock-cum-outrage at Johnny Depp's fay portrayal of the brazen showman swashbuckler. Then they saw the first weekend gross, and suddenly it was a great idea, and weren't they so clever for directing it that way. Ahem. Well, the BD of the first *Pirates* movie is a terrific buy if you're truly the Über Depp fan. It boasts 13 hours of special features among the two-disc set. Right, 13 hours. It's a mix of commentaries, interactive DVD games (fun for one sitting), featurettes, and blooper reel. All-in-all, the complete package but it's too much for any but the most devoted Deppite (Deppian?) but it's a ripping good yarn. **Movie: 6.5 / Features: 7.5**

Bridge to Terabithia

Rated: PG



Don't confuse it for *Chronicles of Narnia* (it lacks some of that movie's more overt religious symbolism) but this kids adventure really isn't for young kids. It's hokey, it's about growing up, but it also delivers a couple pointed scenes that are more real than you'd expect of the fantasy exterior. The featurette on making the special effects is pretty standard fare. **Movie: 6 / Features: 6**

BLOCK-BUSTER

Though not the marketplace force it was several years ago, Blockbuster Video's decision to drop HD-DVD movies in most of its stores in favor of Blu-ray is the first high street message that a decision on the format war may be coming soon. While the online store will continue to carry HD-DVD, only 250 of the chain's 1450 stores will stock them. The war is not over, but the first major victory for Blu-ray has already been won.

ALSO SEEN THIS MONTH

- The Messengers
- Primeval
- Premonition
- Flatliners
- The Patriot
- Bruce Springsteen – Live in Dublin

Brand-new DVD Ten years ago, at the 1997 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, the first retail DVD players were on display, and were expected to reach market by the middle of the year for about $1,000. Today's price? They start at $15.

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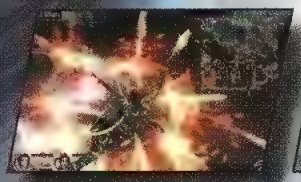
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GTA CENTRAL

GRAND THERAPY AUTO?

Using GTA as a useful tool in a child's psychotherapy? It's practiced and it helps

DR. WILLIAM LEVY To paraphrase Freud: "Sometimes a joystick is just a joystick."

Dr. William H Levy is a practicing general family psychiatrist in Seattle and Kent, WA, and has over 40 years of experience in the field. With an MD from the University of Illinois, Chicago supplemented by psychiatry residency, psychoanalyst training, and positions as assistant clinical professor at the UCLA college of medicine and USC medical school (not to mention thousands of hours of Freudian and Jungian analysis training), Levy is clearly an expert in his field. It's fascinating, then, that he uses *Grand Theft Auto* (along with other types of games) as part of the play therapy treatment for his child patients.

"[*GTA*] is the single most popular game with the patients... maybe except for *Halo*," says Dr. Levy of the choice of game most often selected when his patients come in for play therapy sessions. Some 17 years ago Dr. Levy had to find some alternative location for sessions when the two play rooms at his clinic were unavailable. A local bowling alley, complete with arcade games and pinball tables, fit the bill, and much like the board games and puppets were effective tools in the play room, so these new videogame machines proved to be effective stand-ins for the patients attending these play therapy sessions.

Dr. Levy's first patient treated with games – he calls her "Mary" – was depressed after the loss of her father through divorce. When the play rooms were not available for her sessions, and other alternatives weren't working effectively, Dr. Levy took Mary to his home to use his Apple IIe for the work. He describes Mary playing a "vertical shooter" that sounds a lot like *Space Invaders* or *Galaga*, and as the therapy progressed, so Mary's depression symptoms subsided.

He's quick to point out that videogames are not therapy in and of themselves, but they serve as a medium for the relationship between the therapist and the patient. Coaching them, cheering them on, helping them when needed all becomes part of the therapy treatment with the game as the conduit to that doctor-patient relationship.

Dr. Levy has noted certain patterns in the kinds of games that patients choose to play when they have a choice from his collection of games and platforms. "Children suffering from ADD or ADHD tend to choose "white knucklers" i.e. racing games," he says, "In these games their nature is such that playing them leads to an adrenalin rush (this temporarily decreases ADD symptoms naturally)." Depressed children often choose easier games where they can feel

> "AS A BOARD CERTIFIED PSYCHIATRIST, IT'S INTRIGUING THAT DR. LEVY IS ABSOLUTELY ADAMANT THAT **VIOLENCE IN GAMES DOES NOT LEAD TO VIOLENT BEHAVIOR**"

YES DOCTOR Will *GTA4*'s improved level of realism bring with it more controversy?

a sense of accomplishment. "Children diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Order choose to play angry games with a great deal of shooting and violence towards authority figures. This seems to provide them with a safe outlet for their angry feelings," he adds.

As a board certified psychiatrist, it's intriguing that Dr. Levy is absolutely adamant that violence in games does not lead to violent behavior – "I'll go with what the Supreme Court says about that," he offers, referring to the 100% success rate of cases against violent games (like *GTA*) as being complicit in violent crimes being thrown out. "My patients tell me that they know it's a game and not real life," he adds.

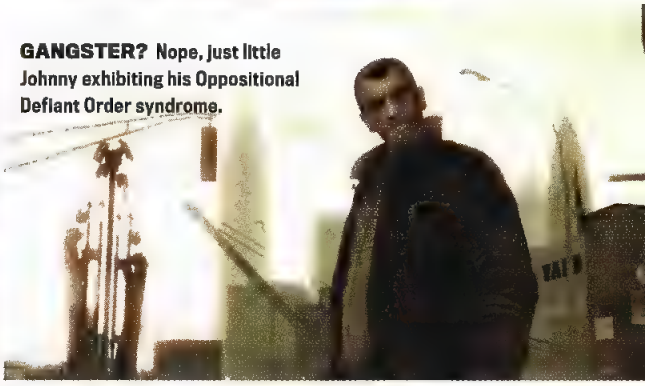
"When parents take away toy guns from kids, the kids pick up sticks and use those as guns," he says with a chuckle. "It's in the kids, not in the guns... Often parents looking for a way to punish children will take away their rights to play videogames – this is an unfortunate choice because it takes away an outlet for negative feelings," he adds.

Dr. Levy's work using videogames as part of the play therapy with kids has not been widely circulated. Still, it's promising to have such positive reinforcement that games like *GTA* can serve valuable purpose in treating some of the behaviors that its most vehement opponents suggest that it causes.

ROB SMITH

AUTHORITY Play therapy can help kids to work with their doctors.

SPEED Helps reduce ADD symptoms.



GANGSTER? Nope, just little Johnny exhibiting his Oppositional Defiant Order syndrome.

METAL GEAR SECTION

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: Hideo Kojima was hard at work on the original *Metal Gear Solid*, which wouldn't see release until the following year. The world would never be the same.

METAL GLOBETROTTER SOLID

Around the World in 20 Years

While many grieve that Solid Snake's golden days have turned into his golden years, you can't say he hasn't earned his silver mane. Now 20 years old in an industry that's still only about 35, Snake's still doing what he does best, with *MGS*'s core essentially intact since its 1987 debut.

Naturally, much of the secret to *Metal Gear*'s success lies in the gameplay itself. Ryan Payton from Kojima Productions (KojiPro) says, "It's hard to underestimate the appeal of the stealth action genre, which originated with *Metal Gear*. It's a rare case of a gameplay type that's loved around the world." And the series' audience has indeed been nothing less than the entire world.

Sony's distribution hasn't always been global, however, making legit copies of *MGS1* sometimes scarce. Artemio Urbina, a Mexican who runs a large site devoted to Director Hideo Kojima's work (junkerhq.net), notes that *MGS1*'s Mexican debut came mostly through the black market. "When *MGS1* was released, the market here was mainly pirated software. You had to import if you wanted original stuff, so I never saw huge stacks of the game." The Mexican fan base only grew when wider-reaching distribution helped bring *MGS2* to a larger audience.

Beyond gameplay, many fans herald the story and high production values as the main draw, yet different cultures dig the games for their own reasons. The appeal for Mexican players can stem from Mexico's complicated relationship with the United States. "The games rely strongly upon American politics and ideology," reflects Urbina, "and that has a different meaning here. American pop culture and Hollywood cinema influence us, but we are also critical of the influence that media holds in America. *Metal Gear* criticizes American politics and media while also praising a hero born from that culture."

On top of local reactions, Director Hideo Kojima's persistent effort to say something meaningful draws players of all national stripes. According to Bulgarian fan Pavel Simeonov (who runs metalgearsolid.org), the main themes resonate as strongly in Bulgaria as anywhere else. "Kojima uses a lot of history, philosophy, and human relationships in the stories," says Simeonov. "Even gameplay has a moral: do not kill when there are other options." Ryan Payton agrees: "Hideo Kojima's unique vision fuels the international appeal of the *Metal Gear* series. Personal experience and an undying interest in international movies, novels, and music have formed Mr. Kojima's design of *Metal Gear*'s world, one that comes to vibrant life through the eye of art director Yoji Shinkawa."

Amid international praise, it's strange that *MGS*'s Japanese fan base is the smallest. In a 2005 interview with Game Informer, Kojima said that the games' morals that "scold the player" account for the cold home reception. What gives the series its international appeal ironically seems to turn off many Japanese.

Payton explains that Japanese opinion doesn't dominate KojiPro. "I'm proud of the fact that, unlike many Japanese developers, Kojima Productions is committed to designing games without prejudice. *Metal Gear Solid* is not designed only for Japanese, only for Americans, or only for any other country. Every day we strive to shed our Japanese-minded idiosyncrasies to provide entertainment for gamers all over the world. *MGS4* represents our greatest effort to create a game for the global market."

Times have changed since *MGS1* and so has the industry, yet Snake's world has stayed solid for 20 years. The big question now: will *MGS4* be Solid Snake's last world tour, or does a reunion loom on the horizon?

JAMES HOWELL

Double Take: The original cover for *Metal Gear* featured a Solid Snake who looked a lot like Michael Biehn's Kyle Reese from the original *Terminator* film. Hey, Kojima is a film buff, after all.

SQUARE ENIX CIRCLE

10 YEARS OF GREATNESS, WITH NO END IN SIGHT

A Reflection on Final Fantasy VII

HEROES AND VILLAINS Everybody's favorite boy toys.

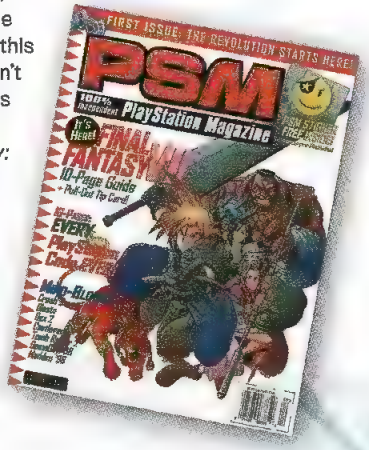
We can't think back on the last 10 years without remembering the game that graced the cover of our first issue. *Final Fantasy VII* was revolutionary in every way, and did more than just redefine the RPG genre – it changed lives. Even today, a decade after its release, its influence is still being felt in its enduring franchise of games (*FFXIII* is one of the premier handful of anticipated PS3 releases), merchandise, and a movie (though most of us try to forget that). That influence extends to numerous other RPGs to have hit the market in its wake, and the format appears to be as popular as ever.

We remember seeing the *FFVII* FMV commercials for the first time and being amazed – the graphics were revolutionary and truly illustrated the power that could be harnessed in PlayStation. Beyond the stunning visuals, there had never been an RPG that used the 3D perspective like *FFVII*, or had such a massive world to explore, or had such an amazing story. We laughed, we cried, we loved... *FFVII* was an incredible new take on RPGs, and set the gold standard for all RPGs that followed.

It's no surprise, then, that *FFVII* was so popular it became a game that could sell consoles. Gamers who had eschewed RPGs played *FFVII* because they didn't want to miss out on the hot property. The story and characters were so loved that Square responded by making spin-off games and movies, and now *FFVII* is a full-on universe of its own. Good games often get sequels, but never has a game been so widely praised and loved that it inspired five games, a full-length CG movie, an original animated video, and two novellas. The "Compilation of *FFVII*," as it's called, is an unprecedented level of response by a game developer to its fans, and it shows how much both Square and gamers care about the franchise.

Of course, the best part is that Square is far from done showing us the love. *Crisis Core*, the PSP prequel, is set to be released in Japan later this year. Of course, you can't forget about Sephiroth's appearance in the upcoming *Final Fantasy: Dissidia*. It's clear that *FFVII* will be around for a long time to come, and we'll be here to cover it every step of the way. TOM HOLOIEN

PSM Great right out of the box.



10 years ago: Join us in a moment of silence for a videogame heroine whose death 10 years ago was one of the most memorable moments in gaming history. We miss you, Aeris.

SEPTEMBER 07

CELLPLAY

THE 411 FOR GAMING ON YOUR CELL PHONE

SONY VS. NINTENDO!

ARE THE CONSOLE GIANTS TAKING THE HARDWARE WARS MOBILE?

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CHUZZLE MOBILE

MEGA MAN II

HE'S BACK!

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THE TOP 5 THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT MOBILE GAMING

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: FUGITIVE

REVIEWED

CHUZZLE MOBILE

MEGA MAN II

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: FUGITIVE

TRANSFORMERS

OUR BLOCKBUSTER SUMMER REVIEW IS INSIDE!

CELLPLAY

September 07

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the July issue of CellPlay, one of the screens for *Duke Nukem Arena* was replaced with a screen for *Stargate SG1: Entropy Syndrome*. You probably noticed: It was the one that didn't look anything like *Duke Nukem!*

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The mini-magazine for gamers who play on the go, anywhere and anytime

WHAT MAKES A GREAT CELL PHONE GAME?

We've reviewed a lot of mobile games during our first three issues, and it's become pretty clear that making a successful game for cell phones isn't the same as making one for the Xbox 360 or even a Nintendo DS. Like a PC or Mac, mobile phones weren't designed as gaming machines. But as new gamer-friendly handset designs and mobile 3D graphics chips start to make their mark, the market is growing by leaps and bounds. (See our cover feature on p. 6 for five compelling reasons why.) After all, if anyone had told us five years ago that we'd be recording videos with our phones, we'd probably be the first to point and laugh.

But since wireless phones are such unique beasts, here are a few factors that can turn an "ehh" cell phone game into a great one.

- ✦ Streamlined controls—The best cell phone games are very easy to control. In fact, some are so user-friendly that they can be played with one hand. Playing "finger twister" with a phone keyboard while attempting to enjoy an action game just isn't fun.
- ✦ Easy to save—Most cell phone games are played in short (but sweet) spurts. When real life intrudes on your gaming, you need to be able to put up your phone at a moment's notice...but not lose valuable progress.
- ✦ It fits the platform—For both of the above reasons, a game should complement its hardware, not be shoehorned into it. Some ports like ***Mega Man II*** (reviewed on p. 13) can be poor fits on a cell phone.

Is there anything we left out? Give us your thoughts by firing off an e-mail to **editor@cell-play.com.**

—THE *CELLPLAY* GANG

INSIDE

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10–16 ..... Game Reviews

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the hard cell

Sony and Nintendo's Mobile Adventure

PATENTS ARE FLYING! WILL THE MAKER OF THE WORLD'S FIRST GREAT GAMING PHONE PLEASE STAND UP?

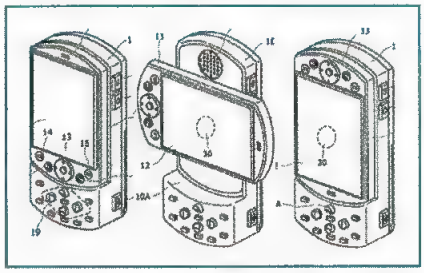
Few "what if?" scenarios could excite mobile gamers more than if two of the biggest powerhouses in console gaming, Sony and Nintendo, revealed plans to create phones based on the companies' popular PSP and Gameboy portables. But that would never happen, right? Wrong—and we've got the patents both game makers have filed to prove it!

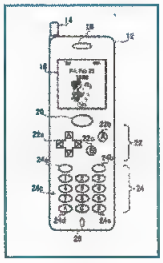
Way back in November 2001, Nintendo filed a patent with the United States Patent & Trademark Office for "an electronic apparatus [that] includes a phone CPU and a game CPU." The proposed phone would automatically pause a game when it receives an incoming call and then restart the game once you finish chatting.

Aside from the tantalizing Mario and Yoshi screens on the drawing of the proposed design, what's cool is that the phone looks like a cross between a Gameboy Advance and a standard cell phone—right below its screen is a D-pad and Nintendo's familiar A and B buttons.

Not to be outdone, Sony Ericsson has more recently filed a patent application dated May 31, 2007 for a mobile device with videogame features. Coincidentally (or not), the design is similar in style to Sony's PSP system, except that its screen is set to swivel. As of press time, Sony adamantly denies that it is in the process of making a gaming phone. But it's hard to believe that Sony Ericsson, one of the world's leading cell phone manufacturers, wouldn't take advantage of company synergy amid the growing mobile game market.

Ultimately, even if neither company actively pursues making its own gaming phone—Internet rumors are rampant that Nintendo will be releasing games for Apples iPhone, for example—it's still fascinating that both were *considering* it. So, now the question is: Microsoft, is that an Xbox phone in your pocket?





Quick HITS

SWEET SIXTEEN

In a study released in May 2007 by J.D. Power and Associates, gaming is the handset feature used most frequently by 16% of cell phone users. The speakerphone is the top draw at 51%, while the camera comes in at 35% and messaging (or "texting") ranks at 22%.

CALL OF JUAREZ ANSWERED

The Wild West shooter that was released on Xbox 360 and the PC earlier this year is now gunning for mobile phones. Polish company Techland has struck a deal with developer Breakpoint to port *Call of Juarez* to the pocket platform by the end of this year.

EA TALKS IPHONE

EA Mobile is in discussions with Apple about creating games for the iPhone, much like it did for Apple's iPod MP3 player. If only EA can take advantage of the iPhone's cool touch pad!

GUITAR HERO ROCKS THE CELL

Hands-On Mobile has been picked as the rock star company to bring *Guitar Hero* to the mobile platform. The wildly popular music game series has already had a sell-out performance on the PS2 and Xbox 360. The question is, will we get to plug a tiny guitar into our cell phones?

MOBILE GAMING EXPLODES

Technology research and advisory company Gartner, Inc. recently released a report estimating that the mobile gaming market will be valued at $4.3 billion worldwide in 2007. The company expects even bigger growth by 2011 when it predicts the market will more than double its 2007 worth to the tune of $9.6 billion. [illegible] here in North America, where the market is expected to leap in value by 237%!

Might and Magic

EXPERIENCE THE HIDDEN MAGIC OF YOUR CELL PHONE

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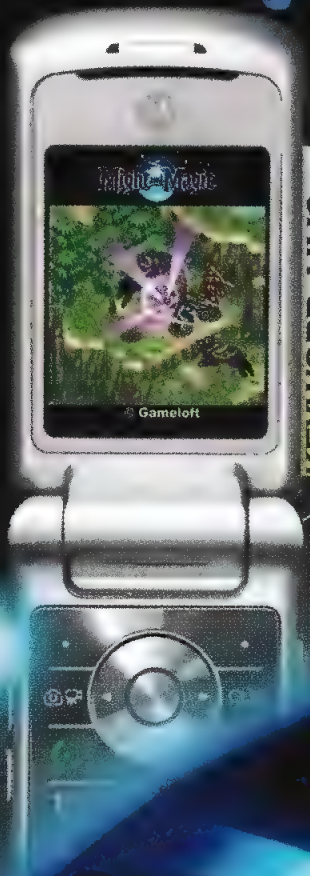

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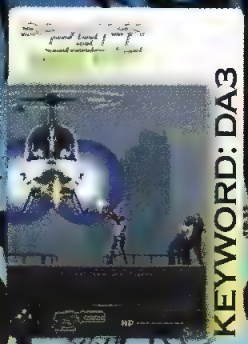

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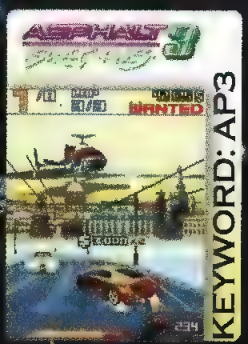

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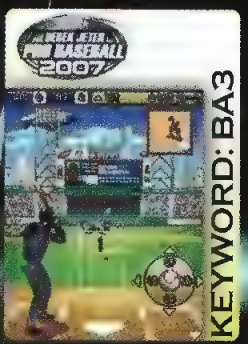

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T-Mobile
stick together

gameloft

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THE TOP FIVE THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT MOBILE GAMING

As more and more people start gaming on their cell phones, the industry just keeps moving faster and faster. Will Nokia's new N-Gage gaming platform be a hit? How will Apple's new iPhone rattle the market? With the mobile landscape changing on a daily basis, we decided it was high time to tally the top five reasons we love being mobile gamers in 2007.

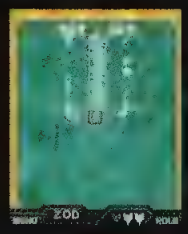
1 THE BIG BOYS ARE JOINING IN THE FUN

Not only do almost all major videogame publishers like EA, Capcom, Konami, and Sony have mobile branches or licensing deals to bring their blockbusters to cell phones, more heavy hitters are joining the party all the time. For example, you may know that id's John Carmack, the father of *Doom* and *Quake*, created the games *Doom RPG* and *Orcs & Elves* for mobiles, but now Blizzard Entertainment is preparing to storm the platform as well.

At press time, the developer of *Diablo*, *StarCraft*, and *World of Warcraft* has an employment ad posted on its corporate website advertising for a Mobile Producer to help bring Blizzard properties to the mobile space, as well as ads searching for a mobile UI designer and a mobile software engineer. Could this mean that *WoW* players will one day be able to quest on their mobile phones? Stay tuned for more details in a future issue of CellPlay.

2 NEW WAYS TO PLAY

In the April 2007 issue, we told you about *The Shroud*, an upcoming RPG that will use GPS technology to track players' locations in the real world and warp you into area-specific hotspots in the virtual world. Now, GestureTek, the same company that invented the



technology powering Sony's EyeToy, has created a whole new way to control mobile games based on movement.

GestureTek's EyeMobile engine uses a cell phone's camera to detect directional movement, essentially turning your entire handset into one big joystick. It has three ways to track movement—Shake (determining the amount of motion in the camera image), Rock (flicking forward and back or side to side), and Roll (tilting from side to side or up and down).

The game *3D Tilt-A-World* is already out now from developer Super Happy Fun Fun and available on a variety of handsets. In it, you tilt your phone to move a ball through a multi-tiered playfield of maze-like paths and puzzles. (It won the Best Interactive Experience Award for 2006 at the

International Mobile Gaming Awards.) The next game to use the EyeMobile tech will be Camera Phone Darts from developer Gosub 60, which will let you play rounds of six different types of pub darts–301, 501, Cricket, Baseball, Gold, and Around the World–by moving your phone in real time.

3 TOURNAMENTS

As part of the Midnight Gaming Championship, I-play will be hosting the first ever mobile gaming tournament featuring its new racer, *The Fast and the Furious: Fugitive* (reviewed on p.16). Matches will take place this summer during 52 MGC tournaments held in cities across the United States. Competitors will have the opportunity to race for thousands in cash and prizes, and a chance to win a round trip ticket to Dallas to compete in the grand championship tournament this October.

While the PC and consoles have been mainstays at e-sports competitions, this will be the first time that wireless gamers will be able to compete against one another, though they still won't be able to do it directly. Since *Fugitive* doesn't have a multiplayer mode, players will race three laps in arcade mode on a track hand-picked by I-play. The best times will then be recorded and tracked.

For information on how you

can compete in the Midnight Gaming Championship, go to www.midnightgamingchampionship.com and see if it's coming to a city near you. You can also text "L8NITE" to 37438 for tournament information.

4 ASIA

Looking for the coolest mobile games in the world? Look no farther than our friends to the Far East in countries like Japan and Korea, where mobile gaming is widespread and the phones more advanced than they are here in the States. According to market research company, Gartner, the Asian market is expected to be worth $1.8 billion in 2007, compared to North America's 716.9 million. So why is Asia one of our top five things to love about mobile gaming? Because as mobile gaming continues to prosper here in the U.S., more and more of the cool toys exclusive to Asian countries will undoubtedly begin to make the trip westward.

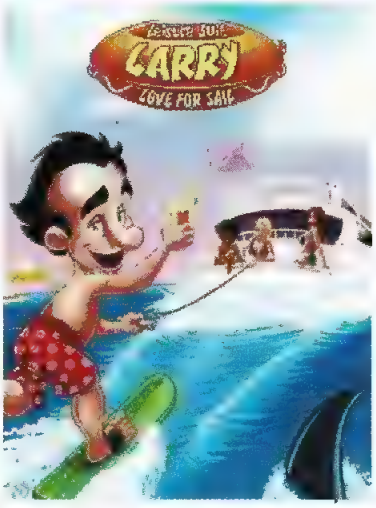
For example, Namco Bandai in Japan has announced *Katamari Damacy Mobile*, a handheld version of the popular *Katamari Damacy* series. It's being specifically designed for the DoCoMo 904i series of mobile phones, a handset not available in the U.S. (The game will actually come pre-installed on the phone!) *Katamari Damacy Mobile* will use GestureTek's EyeMobile engine to allow you to control your katamari by tilting the phone to steer the ball around each level.

While our sources at Namco say that the game isn't currently being considered for the U.S. market, we're willing to bet that it's only a matter of time before it lands on our shores. With Asia leading the way in mobile gaming, we'll happily accept their hand-me-downs–for now.

5 CONVENIENCE

It all really comes down to this, right? Your cell phone goes where you go–to the grocery store, the line at the DMV, the subway, the park, and anywhere else. It's the one gaming platform that can be taken anywhere, doesn't require you to switch out cartridges or discs, and fits right in the palm of your hand.

previews



Genre: Adventure **Developer:** Vivendi Games Mobile **Publisher:** Vivendi Games **www.**sierra.com/en/home/mobile.html **Available:** September 17, 2007

LEISURE SUIT LARRY

Sink or swim as adventure gaming's loudmouth lothario

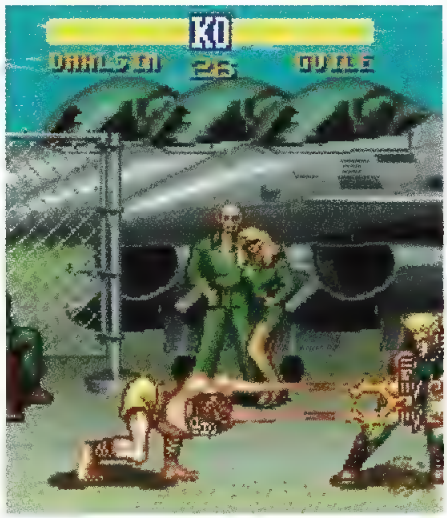
Newer and newer iterations of Windows have left adventure fans wondering how to play their old-school favorites from the early days of PC gaming. Vivendi Games Mobile is coming to the rescue by bringing Sierra's funniest creation, Leisure Suit Larry, to mobile phones this September. *Leisure Suit Larry: Love for Sail!* for cell phones will be a port of the original 1996 laughfest, which remains one of Larry's high points.

The game will cast you as Larry Laffer, lounge lizard extraordinaire. A passenger aboard a luxury cruise ship, Larry is eager to woo one of the many luscious young ladies onboard. Easier said than done—Larry is a notorious lovable loser who can't ever seem to catch a break. In your quest to conquer the fair race, you'll be asked to solve amusing puzzles and wacky contests in order to impress the ladies.

Unfortunately, it looks like the original game's visuals have taken a significant hit in the journey from PC to your cell phone. As you can tell from the screen above, the game's 2D sprite-based graphics look closer to those of *Leisure Suit Larry 1* from 1991 than they do to this later sequel's animated appearance on PC. We're also betting that Larry's more R-rated shenanigans will be toned down to appeal to a wider audience. (For example, the press materials say that you'll be helping Larry "date" women, not score with them.) Still, if this version is able to retain just one-tenth of the fun and hilarity that made the first *Love for Sail* such a blast to play, all we have to say is "welcome aboard!"

game freak series

Leisure Suit Larry's first incarnatation assaulted our Puritan sensibilities in 1987.



Genre: Fighting **Developer:** Capcom **Publisher:** Capcom **www.**capcommobile.com **Available:** Summer 2007

STREET FIGHTER 2

Hadouken revisited

Little did we know back in 1991 that we'd be able to carry a portable version of the year's smash arcade hit around in our pocket a mere 16 years later. But that's exactly what cell phone gamers are getting this summer with *Street Fighter II*, a nearly exact translation of the fighting classic that features all eight of the original's master combatants.

Selecting from Ryu, Ken, Chun Li, E Honda, Blanka, Zangief, Guile, or Dahlsim, you'll face a gauntlet of eight different stages in which you battle against your fellow fighters and several boss characters (like Balrog and M. Bison) on the way to becoming the World Champion. We had a chance to sample a pre-release build of the game, and though opponent AI had yet to be implemented, the original's colorful visuals and animations are being faithfully reproduced on the small screen.

Of course, bringing a fighting game that features numerous attacks and combos to a teensy platform like the mobile phone is tricky. Instead of dropping attacks, Capcom is incorporating every button on the keyboard. For example, your punches—light, strong, and fierce—will be activated by pressing the 7, 8, and 9 keys respectively. I was able to pull off Ken's fireball without any problem, but pulling off Zangief's 360 PileDriver will require you to punch in a finger-curling 6, 5, 4, and punch button (7, 8, or 9) in quick succession.

But for a monthly subscription of $2.99 or an unlimited pass for $5.99, the nostalgia factor of having *Street Fighter II* in your pocket at all times may be enough to overcome problems in firing off elaborate combo moves. Enjoy this classic on Verizon and Sprint/Nextel beginning this summer.

GEOMETRY WARS
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- CELLPLAY

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The Shroud

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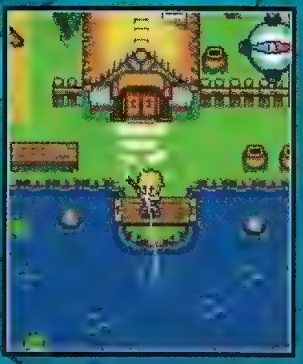

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Step-by-step instructions for each of the major mobile carriers.

ALLTEL

1. Select 'Axcess Apps' from main menu
2. Open 'Axcess Shop'
3. Select the games folder
4. Select the category of game you wish to play
5. Select game, payment option, and download

VERIZON

1. Select 'Menu'
2. Select 'Get it Now'
3. Select 'Get Fun & Games'
4. Select 'Get New App'
5. Select category followed by game
6. Select payment option and download game

T-MOBILE

1. Open T-Zones
2. Go to 'Download Zone'
3. Select 'Games'
4. Pick game, purchase, and download

CINGULAR

1. Open the main menu
2. Select the Entertainment icon
3. Select "Games" in the submenu
4. Select "Shop Games"
5. Select category
6. When you're ready to purchase, select 'Buy Now' then select 'Download'
7. After download, select 'Games & Apps' from main menu to play

SPRINT

1. Open main menu
2. Select 'Downloads'
3. Select 'Games'
4. Select 'Get New'
5. Select category and choose a game.
6. When you're ready to purchase, select 'Get the Game' and click 'Buy'

AMP'D

1. Launch Amp'd Live by pressing the blue Amp'd logo or through the start-up menu
2. Select 'Games'
3. Select category and game.

CHUZZLE MOBILE

There's no trouble with these tribbles

Developer: PopCap **Publisher:** PopCap **Genre:** Puzzle
Current Carriers: All major carriers **Online play:** No
Saves: Auto Save **Vibration:** No **Sound:** Yes

A

PopCap has been creating simple, yet captivating, puzzle games for years, and one of our favorites has been this unassuming little "match-3" game that hit the PC in 2003. Finally it's made the journey to cell phones, and the result is nothing short of spectacular.

Chuzzle Mobile has managed to pack almost everything from the original into this handheld version. In the game, you slide rows of Tribble-like furrballs (aka Chuzzles) to match sets of three or more of them, causing them to pop with joy and allow more Chuzzles to fall from the top of the board. The longer you play, the more unique obstacles present themselves, such as bloated giant Chuzzles, locked Chuzzles, and the rare rainbow Chuzzles. The game has four modes: Classic play, Zen (endless play with no obstacles), Mind-Bender (matching Chuzzles to recreate specified patterns), and Expert (which is self-explanatory).

As its first mobile game to be developed in-house, PopCap has done a magnificent job of streamlining the interface for one-handed control. The entire game can be played using just the scroll-pad and its central action button, which makes it ideal for chuzzling on the subway or anytime else you need an extra hand free. The adorably vibrant visuals and perky sound effects of the original have also been perfectly replicated, including the way Chuzzles' eyes blink and glance around at one another.

Whether you're a card-carrying *Chuzzle* fanatic or leery about any game starring colored lint, *Chuzzle Mobile* is the must-have puzzle game of the year for cell phones. Once you start, you'll be hooked.

game freak series

Chuzzle won "Casual Game of the Year" at the 2003 Digital Entertainment & Media Excellence Awards

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HANDS-ON MOBILE

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game freak series

Eight versions of the Transformers game—based off of the new movie—have been made, for seven platforms.

TRANSFORMERS

Not much more than meets the eye

In the days of 16- and 32-bit game consoles, the easiest way for a developer to translate a big-screen blockbuster into a videogame was to make it a platformer. Let the main character hop around buildings or space debris shooting at enemies and you've got yourself a game! Glu Mobile takes this road well traveled in its journey to bring the *Transformers* movie to cell phones, but left out the fun along the way.

In the game, you play as Optimus Prime, leader of the goody-good Autobots, as he fights against the evil Decepticons through multiple levels while searching for the Allspark, a source of unlimited power. Much of the game practically plays itself—by arming your blaster, Optimus Prime automatically fires at any enemy within range as you jump from platform to platform (like girders, buildings, and rocks). As a transforming robot, you can also turn into a truck to drive through tight spaces or ram Decepticons.

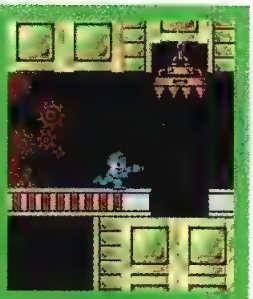
Boss fights, however, are brutal. The difficulty goes from zero to 60 in impossibility, thanks not only to awkward controls but overpowered boss characters. Save your cherished childhood memories (and yourself) from this lackluster action game.

Developer: Glu Mobile **Publisher:** Glu Mobile
Genre: Platform **Current Carriers:** All major carriers
Online play: No **Save:** Auto Save
Vibration: Yes **Sound:** Yes

D

MEGA MAN II

If the Man don't fit, you must quit



Even if you're a diehard fan of the *Mega Man* franchise, it's hard to find much to love about this cell phone port of the 1989 NES favorite. Sure, it's a nearly exact replica of the original platform game, but *Mega Man* II's shoddy mobile control scheme takes all the "mega" out of the gameplay.

If you're a newcomer to the series, Mega Man is a boyish robot created by Dr. Light to stop the evil Dr. Wily and his dastardly schemes. After his defeat in the first game, Wily strikes back in the sequel by building eight of his own super-robots to tackle Mega Man, each with their own abilities. Only by defeating all eight can you finally take on Dr. Wily.

To say that most cell phones simply aren't designed to handle a game like this is an understatement. Because a tiny direction pad is too small to accommodate quick jumps, *Mega Man II* has *three* different jump buttons—jump left, jump up, and jump right. This arrangement just doesn't work, though; you'll be two-handed wrestling with the controls far more than you will with Dr. Wily or his eight automatons. Give it a pass.

Developer: Capcom **Publisher:** Capcom
Genre: Platform **Current Carriers:** All major carriers
Online play: No **Save:** Auto Save
Vibration: No **Sound:** Yes

D-

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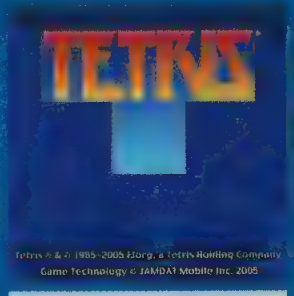

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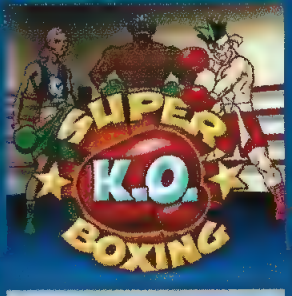

GA611

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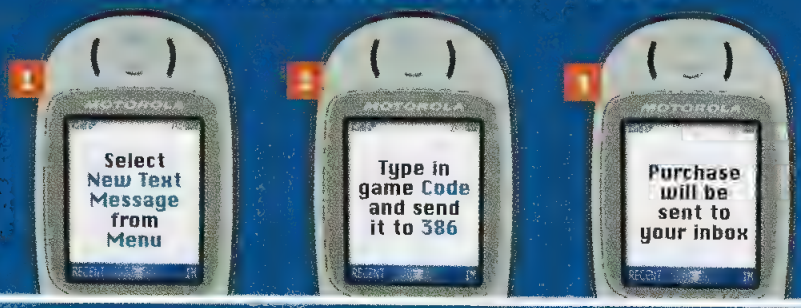

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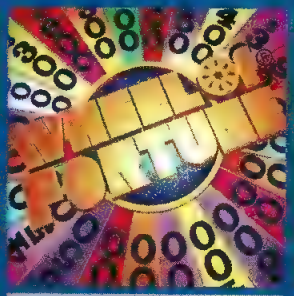

GA623

GA624

GA625

GA626

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MILLIONAIRE MUSIC EDITION

Developer: Capcom **Publisher:** Capcom **Genre:** Trivia **Current Carriers:** All major carriers **Online play:** No **Saves:** None **Vibration:** No **Sound:** Yes

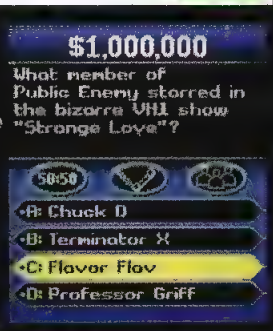
C-

No Regis, but lots of musical trivia

Okay, there's probably no way to realistically translate the suspense and spectacle of "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire"–at its heart, a trivia game show–onto a cell phone. So Capcom doesn't even try–*Millionaire Music Edition* is a stripped-down version of the show that asks nothing but the questions, no frills attached.

The game gets right down to business, asking you a series of 15 progressively harder questions about music. Your goal is that pot of $1,000,000 virtual dollars. The four lifelines–Ask the Audience, 50:50, Phone a Friend, and Switch a Question–can also be called upon to help when you're stuck. If you miss an answer, that's it–game over.

Unless you're a music junkie, answering endless trivia about the name of Mama Cass' band gets old, especially once questions repeat themselves.



Aside from the show's catchy theme music, *Millionaire Music Edition* has little personality to keep you interested, even as a momentary diversion. We hate to admit it, but it actually makes us miss Regis Philbin.

SCENE IT? MOVIE EDITION

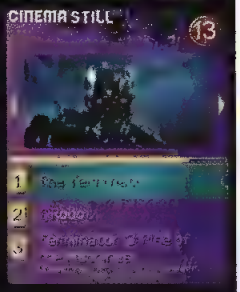
Developer: Namco/Screenlife **Publisher:** Namco **Genre:** Trivia **Current Carriers:** AT&T, Sprint, Boost **Online play:** No **Saves:** None **Vibration:** Yes **Sound:** Yes

B+

Lights, Camera, Trivia Action!

Based on the multimedia trivia game that can be played through your home DVD player, *Scene It?* may seem like an unlikely candidate for mobile phones, yet Namco has done an outstanding job in translating the experience to tiny screens.

When playing, you and up to three of your friends challenge your knowledge of movies by answering trivia questions, such as selecting the title of a film based on a partial image from the movie poster, a scroll of the credits, or an anagram of its letters. Some clues require you to watch a short film clip and then answer a question about it. The faster you buzz in, the more points you get for answering correctly. And just in case you fly through the game's 1,000+ questions, new packets of challenges can be downloaded on a regular basis.



Passing around a handset for group play can be a downer, but *Scene It?* has more than enough bells and whistles to keep any trivia fan-on-the-go engaged.

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: FUGITIVE 3D

Developer: I-Play **Publisher:** I-Play **Genre:** Racing **Current Carriers:** All major carriers **Online play:** No **Saves:** Auto Save **Vibration:** No **Sound:** Yes

B+

Racing across America, mobile-style

In *The Fast and the Furious: Fugitive*, you play as a cop on the run (hence the "fugitive" part of the title) who can only reclaim his badge by participating in illegal street races to bring down an international crime syndicate. Hey, you don't play these games for the plot, right?

Fugitive is all about racing, of course, and it manages to deliver despite the obvious limitations of trying to steer a 3D sports car using a cell phone's directional pad. You can jump right into the action with Quick Play or Arcade modes, or enjoy the simplistic cut-scene setups of Story mode, which sees you racing for specific goals like rescuing damsels in distress. If you're too careless in your driving (such as swerving into parked cars), the cops will join the pursuit and try to bust you before you can finish the race.

Steering the five different types of vehicles available–sports, tuner, high performance, and exotic–is surprisingly easy to do, and they handle well, although you shouldn't expect authentic physics modeling. In addition to racing your cars, you can also customize them with new paints, decals, and body kits, such as upgrading the bumpers or adding aerodynamic fins. For race fans, *Fugitive* is a game to catch.

REVIEWS

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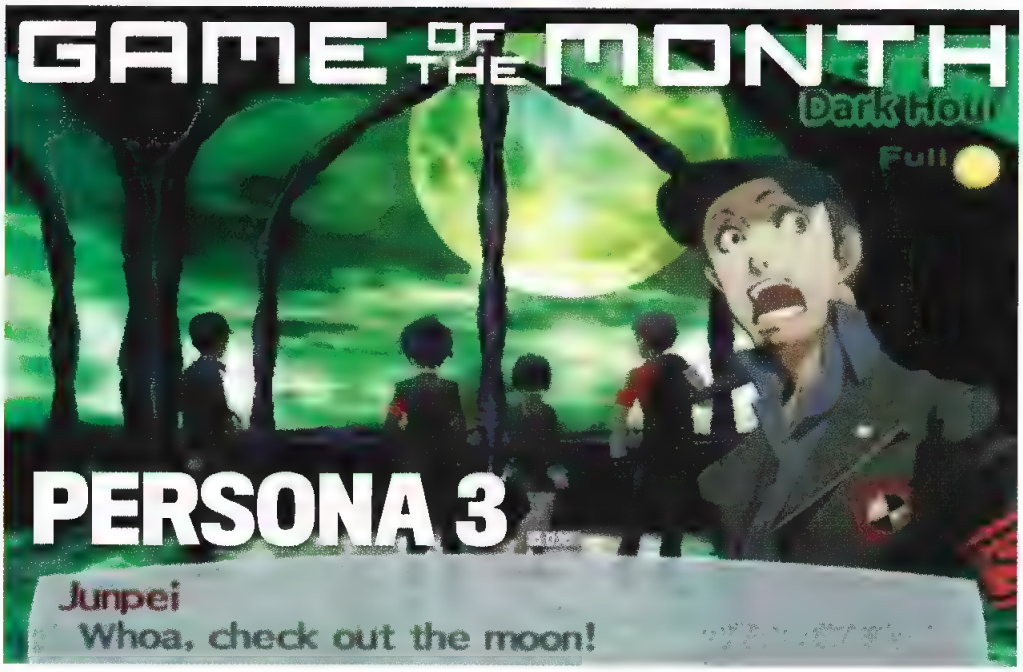
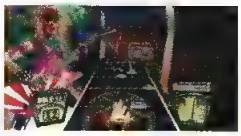


The Best of the Month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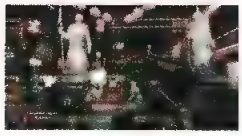
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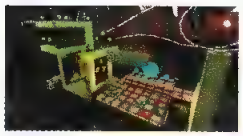
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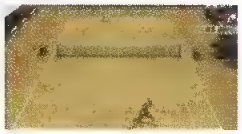
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PSM Scores Explained

PSM SCORE 10.0 out of 10 — **LEGENDARY** A masterpiece we'll remember for years to come.

PSM SCORE 9.0 out of 10 — **OUTSTANDING** One of the best games you'll play all year.

PSM SCORE 8.0 out of 10 — **GREAT** As good as you can normally expect – buy it!

PSM SCORE 7.0 out of 10 — **GOOD** A fun game that's well worth playing.

PSM SCORE 6.0 out of 10 — **OKAY** An average experience in every way.

PSM SCORE 5.0 out of 10 — **RISKY** Even fans of the series/genre should beware.

PSM SCORE 4.0 out of 10, **PSM SCORE 3.0** out of 10, **PSM SCORE 2.0** out of 10, **PSM SCORE 1.0** out of 10 — **FOUR AND BELOW** Games in this tier range from bad to absolutely worthless. They're really not worth your time, and definitely not worth your money. Anything below a three isn't worth renting, even for laughs.

How We Review

Nobody knows PlayStation games like PSM – our experts have reviewed every one of them for the past 10 years. To help you quickly separate the best from the rest, we spotlight our "Best of the Month" titles with feature coverage. Big review or small, we play every game through to the end to give you the most accurate analysis. Finally, our independent status is your guarantee that our opinions aren't influenced by any corporate bias. We appreciate your trust, and we'll never steer you wrong.

10 YEARS OF PSM

Free-for-all While geographically based on Miami, Vice City boasts only about 23,000 residents. Which means there is much less traffic congestion when you need to "getaway." There are however, about 1 policeman for every 12.5 residents. Good luck.

GAME OF THE MONTH

Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3

DATE THE CHEERLEADER, SAVE THE WORLD

PS2

PSM SCORE 9.0 out of 10

We wouldn't blame you for overlooking a number of the recent solid, high-scoring RPGs. Good quality though they may be, the formulaic nature of the gameplay design means that they can get old even when the story or characters are outstanding. We can't forgive you if you overlook *Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3*, though, because this RPG-dating sim hybrid is totally original, very entertaining, and just plain fun.

No, you didn't misread that – *Persona 3* combines RPG elements with those of a Japanese dating sim, and the mix, while weird, works really well. The characters, including the silent protagonist who you control, are high school students by day and demon hunters by night, and you play both sides of their lives. The game progresses slowly, using an internal calendar to let you play through a full virtual year of their lives, one day at a time. You go to school, attend clubs, hang out with people around town, and go on dates during the day, then, at night, you put on your gear and go fight demons in a dungeon-tower called Tartarus during the "Dark Hour," a block of time that occurs at midnight that most people do not experience. Although the dating elements can appear to be a fun, yet inconsequential diversion, they actually serve a more important purpose.

Your characters fight using alter egos known as Personas, which can be summoned by using an evoker, a gun-shaped device that the characters must fire into their own heads to use. Oh, it's certainly disturbing to watch, but it fits the weird, darkly humorous ambience of the game. Most people can only use one Persona. If they can use

PRICE	$49.99
ESRB RATING	Mature
MULTIPLAYER	No
SUPPORTS	Nothing
PUBLISHED BY	Atlus
MADE BY	Atlus

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago The first game in the *Persona* series was released in October of 1997, and although *Persona 3* isn't a direct sequel, most of its thematic elements are the same as those in its predecessors.

PIERCED But it doesn't say exactly where...

them at all, but you can use many, and even switch them during battle. Personas can be found in Tartarus, or created by fusing other Personas together, and that's where your social network comes in. Every relationship you have corresponds to a certain type of Persona, and the stronger the corresponding relationship, the stronger the Persona you create through fusion. If you have a Persona of the right type, your relationship will grow quicker as well, so balancing both elements effectively is necessary to make swift progress.

The game uses a battle system called Once More where, by exploiting an enemy's weakness, you can knock it down, earning an extra turn for that character. You can't directly control your allies, but you can give them overarching commands during battle, such as use only heal/support moves, attack a certain enemy, or stand by. The A.I. is smart, too, and will display some cunning tactics of its own. As you progress, you will be able to give more specific commands, and it will become more and more important to do so, as boss battles are not a cakewalk. Oh, and there are no random battles – you see the enemies walking around Tartarus and can choose to fight them or not, gaining an advantage if you can surprise them. Just be sure they don't surprise you.

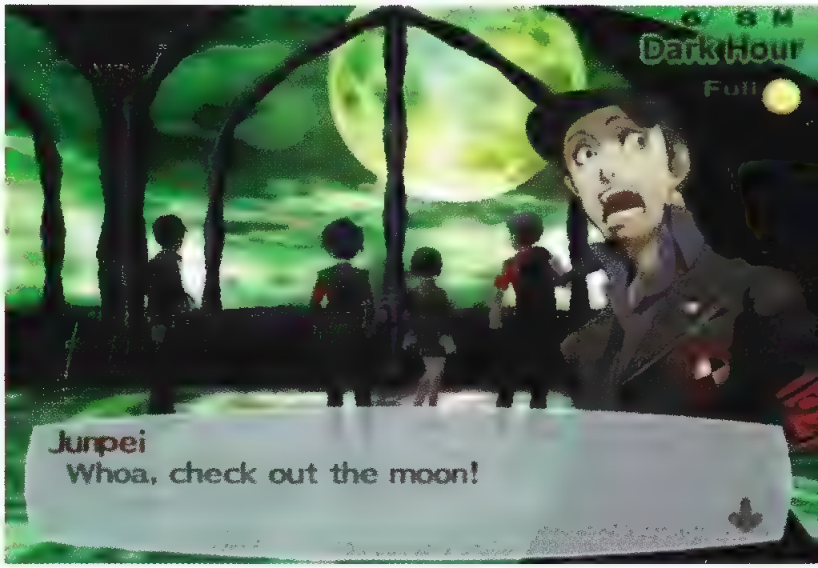
It's not just the gameplay we love about *Persona 3*, though. The graphics are what we'd expect from a late-era PS2 game, and *Persona 3* is probably one of the best 3D adaptations of the "anime look" that we've ever seen. On top of that, the localization is fantastic, and the dialogue is engaging and often quite funny. References to American pop culture, like Cylon Tea (comes in 12 varieties!) and Bauer Bars (keeps you going for 24 hours!) are fun Easter eggs to find as well.

Persona 3 isn't perfect – it can be a pain not having direct control of your allies, and the game has an infuriatingly low number of save points – but it's damn close. Regardless of whether or not you like RPGs you should pick it up, because it's one of the most enjoyable games we've played in a long time. **TOM HOLOIEN**

GREAT FENCER But does she know how to date?

HOW TO GET THE GIRL

We realize we might not be the best [illegible] but we sure can give dating sim advice! To win the hearts of the fair maidens in *Persona 3*, make sure you go out with them often, don't say mean things, stand up for them, and give them presents like flowers and teddy bears. You know, maybe this does apply to real life...



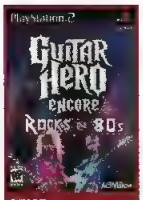
JOKER Actually, Junpei is talking about his undraped butt.

10 years ago *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, a show about high school kids who fight supernatural beings, debuted on television.

▸ **ROCK ON!** Now even kids with absolutely no musical talent can be rock stars! Hey, wait a minute...

PS2

PSM SCORE **8.0** out of 10



PRICE	$49.99
ESRB RATING	Teen
MULTIPLAYER	2-player co-op, 2-player versus
SUPPORTS	None
PUBLISHED BY	Activision
MADE BY	Red Octane

verdict

It's **not for everybody**, and its price tag certainly leaves something to be desired, but *Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks the 80s* carries on the *GH* legacy with all the **great game modes of GH2** and a song list of **'80s classics** that will **make you wanna rock 'n' roll all night.**

Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks the 80s

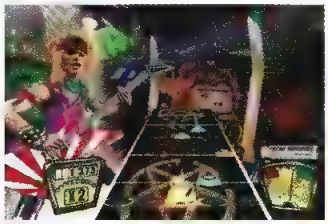
BREAK OUT THE TIGHT PANTS AND MAKEUP

Everyone loves *Guitar Hero* (*GH2* was our game of the month in issue 118, scoring 9.5), and part of the game's appeal is that it offers all kinds of musical tracks from various genres and decades. This means that there's something for everybody; of course, it also means there's less of the stuff you like. With *Guitar Hero Encore*, developers Red Octane have targeted the children of the '80s, bringing 30 songs of pure hair metal, pop-rock, and new wave goodness.

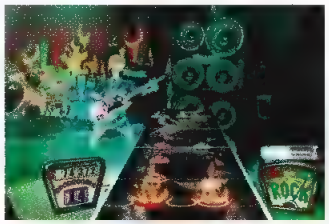
All the new features from *GH2*, like co-op play and practice mode, are available in *Encore*, and every difficulty level is well represented. In fact, we have to say that *Encore* is a bit more polished than *GH2*. For instance, *Encore* does a better job of ramping up the challenge (the last set of songs are significantly more tricky than the opening set, even on the same difficulty), meaning the game helps ease you more effectively into the next difficulty level, and makes that jump from medium to hard is (somewhat) easier. Bass and rhythm guitar parts are now more difficult as well, so when you play co-op you won't have to fight over who gets the "real" part. There are fewer unlockables – all the guitars are still there, but there's only one secret character, and no hidden songs – but the game itself is so solid that this doesn't detract very much from its greatness.

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: Former Oingo Boingo singer/songwriter Danny Elfman wrote two scores, *Good Will Hunting* and *Men In Black*, that were later nominated for Academy Awards, but both lost (to *Titanic* and *The Full Monty*, respectively).



METAL A true metal guitar – a Gibson Explorer with Rising Sun paint.



HOT Set your frets on fire and rock the nation!

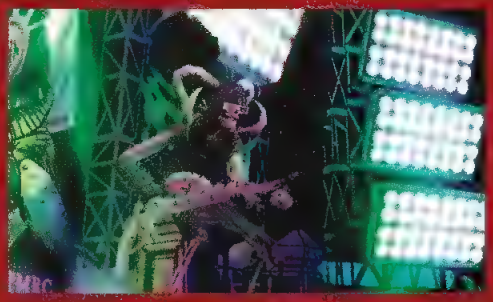
SHREDDING You and a buddy can form a power trio with a virtual drummer.

Of course, you're going to buy this game for the songs, and *Encore* presents a good variety of '80s bands and styles. The Scorpions, Poison, Flock of Seagulls, The Police, Iron Maiden, Oingo Boingo... the list goes on. Even the website homestarrunner.com makes an appearance again in the form of Limozeen, a fake '80s hair metal band, and their smash hit "Because, It's Midnight." There are more real studio tracks this time around, too – five in total, including hits by Twisted Sister and Judas Priest.

The song list isn't perfect, though. Sure, we knew that since it was the '80s edition of *GH* there wouldn't be something for everybody, but some bands and songs that defined the decade are missing, and we could point to hundreds of tracks that we'd hoped would be included. Notable absentees include Queen, Journey, and almost all punk rock... and Prince, Duran Duran, and Bon Jovi. *Encore* also suffers again from using the wrong songs from the right bands – "No One Like You" instead of "Rock You Like A Hurricane" from the Scorpions, for instance. It doesn't help that previous *Guitar Hero* games have featured plenty of '80s music, so the more popular songs from some bands, like The Police, have already been used. Don't get us wrong – most of the tracks are great '80s classics, but we expected better from a game that features solely '80s music.

There's also one other glaring problem with *Encore*: there are only 30 songs, which isn't too bad if you look at it as an expansion for *GH2*, but it has a $50 price tag – the exact same as *GH2* itself. As an expansion pack focused at a specific group of people ('80s music fans), it should not cost nearly as much as it does. That said, *GH Encore* is a great game that's just as fun to play as *GH1* and *2*, and although it's not for everybody, if you're an '80s fan it's absolutely worth the price of admission. TOM HOLOIEN

THE TRACKS



1) OPENING LICKS
(Bang Your Head) Metal Health - Quiet Riot
We Got The Beat - The Go Go's
I Ran (So Far Away) - Flock Of Seagulls (original artist)
Balls To The Wall - Accept
18 And Life - Skid Row

2) AMP WARMERS
No One Like You - Scorpions
Shakin' - Eddie Money
Heat Of The Moment - Asia
Radar Love - White Lion
Because, It's Midnite - Limozeen (original artist)

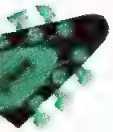
3) STRING SNAPPERS
Holy Diver - Dio
Turning Japanese - The Vapors
Hold On Loosely - .38 Special
The Warrior - Scandal (original artist)
I Wanna Rock - Twisted Sister (original artist)

4) RETURN OF THE SHRED
What I Like About You - The Romantics
Synchronicity II - The Police
Ballroom Blitz - Krokus
Only A Lad - Oingo Boingo
Round And Round - Ratt

5) RELENTLESS RIFFS
Ain't Nothin But A Good Time - Poison
Lonely Is The Night - Billy Squier
Bathroom Wall - Faster Pussycat
Los Angeles - X
Wrathchild - Iron Maiden

6) FURIOUS FRETWORK
Electric Eye - Judas Priest (original artist)
Police Truck - Dead Kennedys
Seventeen - Winger
Caught In A Mosh - Anthrax
Play With Me - Extreme

SCARY Personally, I'm grateful he's dead.



10 years ago: The legendary *PaRappa the Rapper*, the game that arguably started the whole rhythm genre, earned a perfect 5/5 from us in the October issue.

HYSTERICAL HISTORY Back then, everyone had small bodies, huge, puffy heads, and a sour cheese odor.

PSP

PSM SCORE 9.0 out of 10

PRICE	$29.99
ESRB RATING	Teen
MULTIPLAYER	No
SUPPORTS	Nothing
PUBLISHED BY	Sony
MADE BY	Level-5

Jeanne d'Arc

THE PSP FINALLY GETS SOME LEVEL-5 LOVE

The Hundred Years' War has never seemed as fascinating as it does in *Jeanne d'Arc*. By infusing fantastical elements into a series of historical events, Level-5 reinvigorates the classic tale of Jeanne d'Arc (or Joan of Arc) in this turn-based RPG.

Developer Level-5 has taken a lot of liberties with plot and characterization – it is a game, after all – but the end result is captivating. The story begins with an innocently sleeping child (King Henry VI of England) absorbing the powers of an evil demon lord. When the child awakes, he has become a wide-eyed, power-hungry monster. Jeanne d'Arc enters the picture when an armlet (initially one of the five used to seal off the demon lord) wraps itself around her wrist. That same night, her home is ransacked by troops, and she swears vengeance on England (using the newfound powers of the armlet).

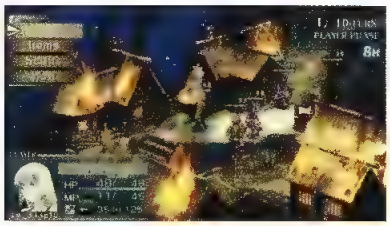
As she sets out on her mission, Jeanne attracts a cast of lively characters to join her quest, including an axe-wielding lion and an arrogant Frenchman (who talkz like zis and at one point grudgingly tilts his hat "in her general direction" – the developers had a lot of fun making this title, and it shows, in a good way). In terms of plot direction, art style, and depth of characterization, *Jeanne d'Arc* has a distinct anime charm.

However, at its heart, *Jeanne d'Arc* is still a strategy RPG (Level-5's first!), and in this element, the game shines. With fully 3D battlegrounds and a moveable

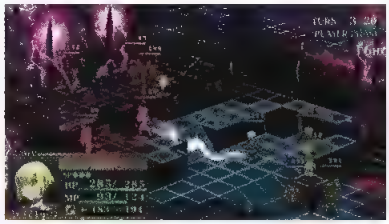
FRANCE Reeks of sour cheese, even on this map.

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: One of the most famous strategy RPGs ever, *Final Fantasy Tactics*, was released in Japan (the U.S. would get the game the following year). However, we did get Konami's *Vandal Hearts* in 1997.



FIRE When in doubt, set the witch's whole village on fire, then pass out marshmallows.



GRIDLOCK Medieval conflict sometimes resembles a bout of *Marble Madness*...

DEFEAT The losing army does the Drain Dance, signifying going down the crapper.

camera that lets you explore them, the game is already one step ahead of the crowd. When you add in the slew of innovative gameplay features, the delightful snippets that characters shout during battle, and the forgiving turn system, you have a tactical game that is simultaneously challenging, immersive, and accessible.

Level-5 has taken the basics of a tactical game (move characters, use skills, end turn), and made them at once both simpler and more complex. If you move a character two blocks forward and realize the enemy is still one block outside of your spell range, you can undo the move and try again. Characters' turns do not end until you actually perform a skill. This lends itself to all sorts of fine-tuning and strategizing before your characters even take a single step.

Skills are presented in a deceptively simple interface. Each character is granted blank slots that they fill with skill stones (ranging from magic spells to stat bonuses). Depending on your playing style, you can create your characters in different ways (see the sidebar to the right).

The devs have added a few features keep this from being the same old strategy RPG as well. Burning Auras are swirls that form behind enemies after they've been attacked. When your characters step into the swirl, they are granted an attack bonus. Also, if you have two or more characters standing shoulder to shoulder, Unified Guard activates when one of them is attacked, giving a defense bonus. Finally, some of your characters can Transform into more powerful beings – their attacks do more damage, they have additional skills, and they have a passive ability called "Godspeed," which lets them take an extra turn for every killing blow they perform.

All in all, Level-5 has made a deep, varied, and challenging battle system with a handful of nuances you can utilize to you advantage. That, in conjunction with a fantastically told story, makes *Jeanne d'Arc* a game that you just shouldn't pass up. **TERESA DUN**

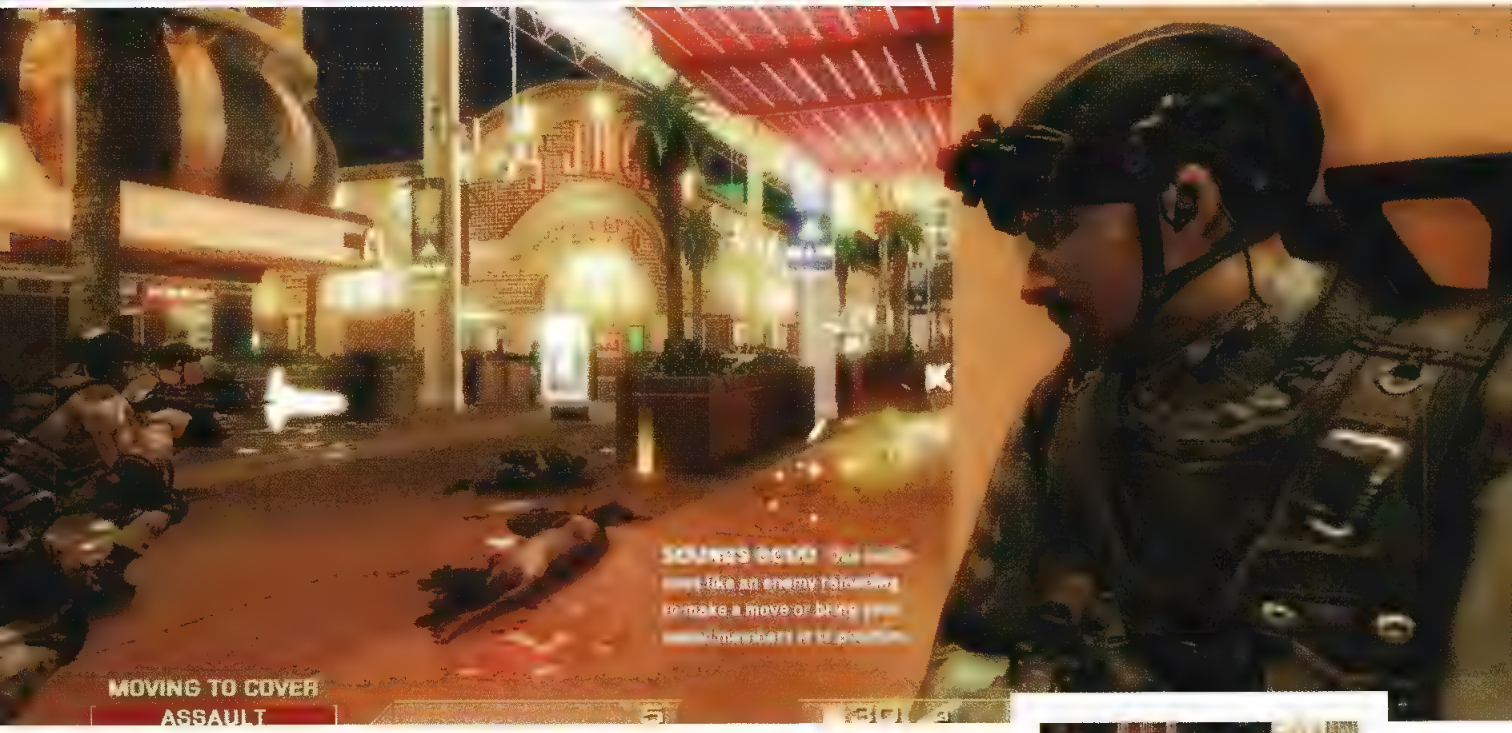
BY THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS

Some skill stones give bonuses to certain elements (Sol, Luna, or Stella). The three are interrelated (Sol trumps Stella, which trumps Luna, but Luna holds power over Sol). Enemies are affiliated with elements, so your +1 Luna archer will have an attack boost when shooting a Sol-loving swordsman, but if your Luna archer is hit by a Stella attack, he'll take some extra damage.

BREAST PLATE Or would that be breasts plate?

MAP In many old French villages, a huge white glove meant "Tu as ici."

10 years ago: *The Fifth Element* is released in theaters. Two years later, director Luc Besson and actress Milla Jovovich would reunite in *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc*.



Rainbow Six Vegas

ALWAYS BET ON TEAM RAINBOW

TERRORIST HUNT A change of pace from the Story Mode, you can pick a map with the objective of taking out every terrorist yourself.

PSM SCORE
8.5
out of 10

PRICE	$59.99
ESRB RATING	Mature
MULTIPLAYER	Yes
SUPPORTS	•720p •PS Network •Sixaxis Tilt
PUBLISHED BY	Ubisoft
MADE BY	Ubisoft Montreal

Terrorists, hear this: don't – I repeat, don't – mess with Sin City. Nothing will piss off the leading counterterrorist unit, Team Rainbow, more than bringing The Strip to a grinding halt. When the newly built Calypso Casino is attacked, you – Logan Keller – and your two A.I. squad mates are sent in to clear up the mess.

This tactical combat sim (though the game is built on Unreal Engine 3, the focus is strategy over deathmatch-like action) is tight, taut, and beautifully produced. The story mode kicks off in Mexico and serves to introduce most of the tactical controls. Getting your two buddies in place to execute room-clearing operations takes work (get it wrong and you're told "that was tactically unsound").

DO DAMAGE You can shoot through cars, windows, and under vans. See a stray leg? Shoot it and watch the terrorist dance.

At any closed door, you can use the snake cam to see what's behind. A convoluted Sixaxis control method is available, but switch to the right analog stick in the menu setup and save yourself a ton of aggravation. From the snake cam, you can plan assaults, including tagging specific targets for priority takedown – very useful in hostage situations where any civilian loss of life fails the mission.

On the normal difficulty setting (the realistic level is virtually one-shot death), if you take a few shots, your vision blurs, then goes dark, giving you a chance to get to cover and chill for a little while. Still, you have to take each challenge slowly, use the map that will show tangos in red, and if they're on the move, command your teammates to advance from behind cover and steadily eliminate each threat.

Visually, *Rainbow Six Vegas* is a treat. The bright lights of the casino are perfectly recreated, and coupled with the sounds of slot machines whirring, terrorists yelling, and bullets flying, make every scene memorable. Moving on from the Calypso to the Strip, an under-construction casino, and the Nevada (Hoover) Dam, the level design adds greater complexity to managing your squad and ensuring you check every corner.

While some of the story doesn't hang together as neatly as the presentation deserves, each setting offers incredible moments and serious tactical action. Throw in some of the most comprehensive online options currently available on PS3, and *Rainbow Six Vegas* delivers great value for the combat sim-minded. ROB SMITH

10 years ago Red Storm Entertainment had a new take on the deathmatch action that was all the rage with *Quake* and *Duke Nukem 3D* on PC. *Rainbow Six* came out of left field in 1998 and single-handedly created the tactical action genre.

CONFESSIONS OF A GAME STORE CLERK

GAMES WE WISH WE DIDN'T LOVE

THE WORST GAMING PR DISASTERS

THE WORST CELEBRITY GAMING VOICEOVERS

- The rudest game cheats
- Game franchises run into the ground
- Ultra-rare gaming merchandise
- Big game ending movies
- Mini-games that are better than full-price

- Nintendo's biggest mistakes
- The most dangerous people in the games industry
- The goriest gaming moments

MEMO

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Dungeons & Dragons Tactics

INDULGE YOUR NERDY SIDE WITH THIS TACTICAL MASTERPIECE

PSP

PSM SCORE 8.5 out of 10

PRICE	$39.99
ESRB RATING	Teen
MULTIPLAYER	None
SUPPORTS	Nothing
PUBLISHED BY	Atari
MADE BY	Kuju Entertainment

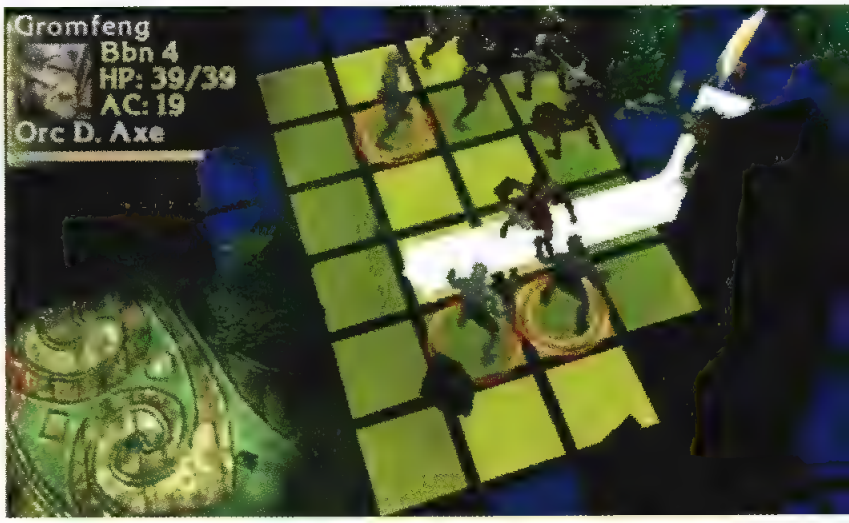
verdict

With far and away the **deepest character creation system** of any RPG we've ever played (which isn't surprising, considering it implements the entire D&D 3.5 rulebook), *D&D Tactics* will **test your tactical prowess** and engage you even if you're not already a D&D nerd... uh, fan.

Okay, we realize that *Dungeons & Dragons* players are commonly seen as the nerdiest of the nerdy, even by gamer standards. We promise not to tell your friends if you play *D&D Tactics*, though, because this is one game you shouldn't miss.

First, some caveats: *D&D Tactics* requires patience, especially if you haven't played the tabletop game before. While there are four basic tutorials to help familiarize you with the game's battle system, there is no direct explanation of the core *D&D* rules, meaning newbies will probably feel overwhelmed at first. However, with a simple press of the triangle button, you can bring up a description of pretty much any term you don't understand, so you should be able to familiarize yourself with the system.

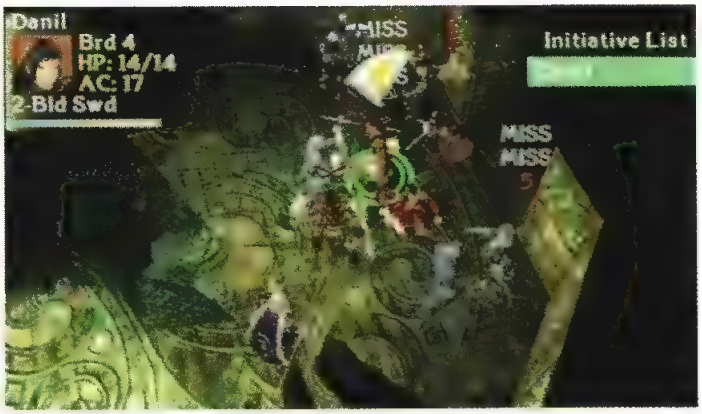
And what a system it is. *D&D Tactics* truly delivers the full D&D experience, implementing the entire D&D 3.5 rules set. You can customize your party of six to an impressive degree, controlling every aspect of their stats, but you don't have to be hardcore about it – you can give the game some or all control if you want.



ATTACK Is it time to cast Magic Missile yet?

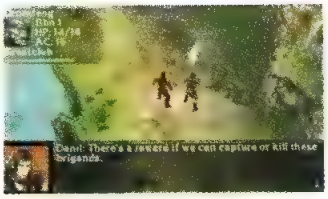
The battle system is deep as well, allowing you to perform moves – like feints or intimidating your enemy – beyond simply attacking or casting spells. Position matters: You can use the diverse terrain to ambush or flank your enemy. You'll need every advantage, too: the maps are huge – far beyond normal tactical RPG maps – and the A.I. is smart, so it's not uncommon to spend over an hour to reach your objective. Luckily, you can save at any point.

It all contributes to a great tactical RPG experience with the enormous depth and customizability of the D&D rules system. It may start slowly, but we guarantee you won't want to put it down. **TOM HOLOIEN**



DEFEND Surely now is the time to cast Magic Missile.

LORE There's enough pseudo-mythology to keep any nerd happy.



JOURNEY See, I told you we should have cast Magic Missile...

10 years ago Wizards of the Coast acquired the rights to D&D from near-bankrupt publishers TSR and have since released two editions of the game, including version 3.5 in 2003, which is the latest version used in *D&D Tactics*.

PSP

PSM SCORE 8.0 out of 10

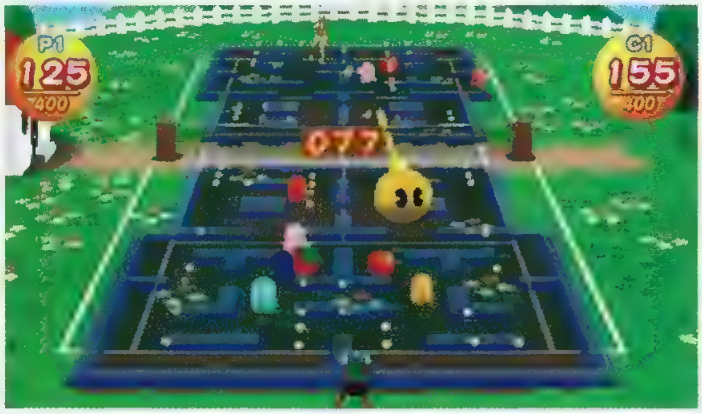
Smash Court Tennis 3

A SMASHINGLY FUN PORTABLE TENNIS EXPERIENCE

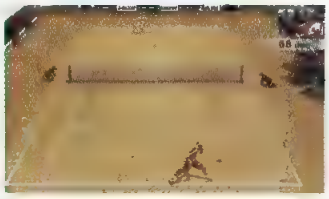
PRICE	$29.99
ESRB RATING	Everyone
MULTIPLAYER	2-player versus
SUPPORTS	Ad hoc Wi-Fi
PUBLISHED BY	Namco Bandai
MADE BY	Namco Bandai

Like Sega's *Virtua Tennis*, Namco Bandai's *Smash Court 3* is very easy to pick up and play, but has significant depth beneath its deceptively simple exterior. Sure, you only need to hit a button to hit a shot, but to hit it well, you must master when to release the shot button, which gives the dedicated player much more control.

Extensive tutorials will teach you everything you need to know to play, and the game includes fun mini-games, like *Pac-Man* tennis, to go along with the deep pro tour mode where you try to take your created character all the way to the top. (You can also use a variety of real pros, of course.) *Smash Court 3* only really falters in difficulty – even as a low-level created character, it isn't hard to beat top-ranked opponents – but it's still a fun alternative to *Virtua Tennis* that anyone can enjoy . TOM HOLOIEN



WOW! You can play with Pac-Man balls... oops!



CLAY Or you can just go for the realistic look.

PSP

PSM SCORE 8.5 out of 10

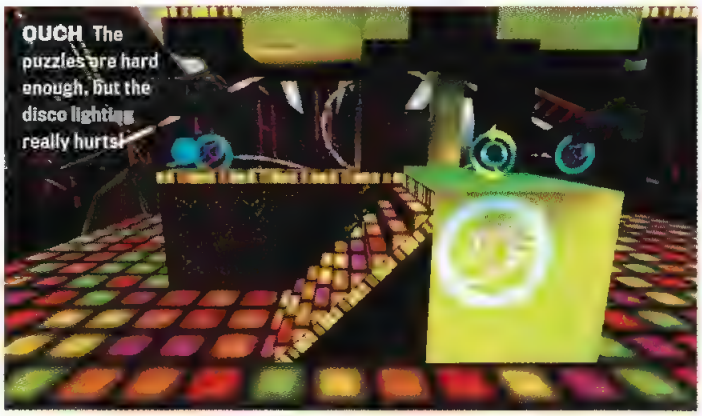
Crush

AN INNOVATIVE PUZZLER THAT TRULY STRETCHES YOUR BRAIN

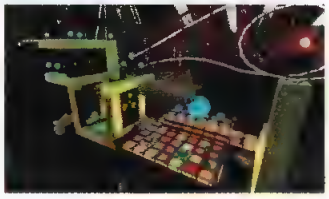
PRICE	$29.99
ESRB RATING	Everyone
MULTIPLAYER	No
SUPPORTS	Nothing
PUBLISHED BY	Sega
MADE BY	Zoe Mode

Truly original games are becoming fewer and farther between, but every so often, we get a game like *Crush*. Simply put, the goal of the game is to guide the main character, Danny, to the exit of each level. The catch? The exit is on a completely different plane, on a separate platform. Luckily, Danny can "crush" the level from 3D to 2D and back again, allowing him to maneuver through the level with some clever camera work.

Difficulty ramps up considerably as the game goes on, and levels become more complex, but the game does a good job of being challenging without being overly frustrating. The music and backgrounds grow tiresome after a while, but they fit the surreal mood of the game. Our only real complaint is that 40-odd levels weren't enough to satisfy us, but the fact that *Crush* left us wanting more speaks volumes about its quality. TOM HOLOIEN



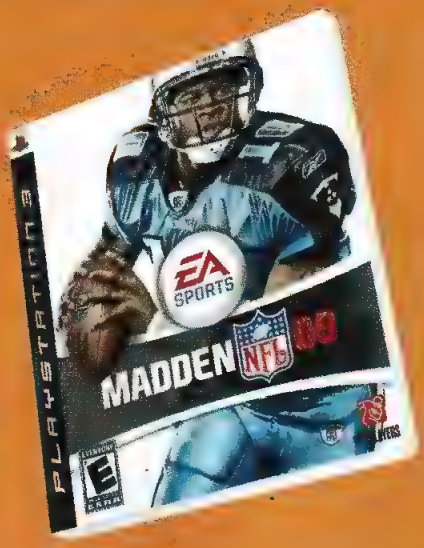
OUCH The puzzles are hard enough, but the disco lighting really hurts!



PHYSICS So if we crush this thing, we win, right?

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: *Smash Court 3* developer/publisher Namco Bandai was simply known as Namco, and had just released a little game called *Tekken 3* into arcades across Japan.



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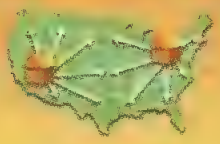

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Hot Brain

PSM SCORE 7.0 out of 10

MORE PROOF THAT LEARNING IS FUN!

If taking an I.Q. test shoots a thrill down your spine, you'll get a huge kick out of *Hot Brain*. This game is a collection of puzzle goodies sorted into five categories: Logic, Memory, Math, Language, and Concentration. "Musical Memory" is essentially a game of "Simon Says" (it barks out patterns that you have to mimic), "Sequencer" has you predicting spatial patterns, and "Untangle" tests how well you can follow a ball of yarn without losing focus. True, some of the games make you feel like you're back in a classroom (identifying misspelled words, for example), but overall, *Hot Brain* offers enough variety and challenge to please most puzzle lovers.

TERESA DUN

Rugby 08

PSM SCORE 7.0 out of 10

MORE RUGBY! C'MON, YOU KNOW YOU'RE EXCITED!

You're just counting the days to the September kick-off of the 2007 Rugby World Cup, right? Well the U.S. is in it (but won't win it), and 24 other nations will meet in France to decide the winner. Or you can do it on your PS2 with a very accessible sim of a very complicated sport. The tutorial expects you to know the core rules, so complete noobs will be lost instantly. But if you know the 15-man game, then this year's version smoothes out the handling of several complex situations (notably line-outs). Camera tweaks also make the flow of the game more apparent, so you should be winning at the lowest of the three difficulty levels pretty quickly.

ROB SMITH

Brave Story: New Traveler

PSM SCORE 7.5 out of 10

THIS STORY COULD HAVE BEEN EPIC

Assuming you're a fan of the *Brave Story* anime, *Brave Story: New Traveler* will be a treat for you, as you'll recognize some of the characters from the movie and enjoy a whole new yarn in the *Brave Story* universe. Sadly, it could've been the best RPG on the PSP to date, but it's marred by an exhausting 2-3 hours of intros and reading (yup, no voices). Once the pacing picks up, the quality underlying game gets a chance to shine. The turn-based battle system works well (figuring out combos is actually rewarding), the graphics [illegible] but some of Square Enix's more recent stuff to shame, and [illegible] are virtually [illegible]

CASEY LYNCH

CUTE You must be this cute to join our team.

HIT The turn-based battle system works well.

HUH? How'd that ugly guy get in there?

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: *Final Fantasy VII, Resident Evil Director's Cut, Ace Combat,* and *Super Street Fighter Collection* all received 5 out of 5 stars in our very first issue.

THE PAIN Blue circles mean you're depressed.

HEY! Isn't that Tina Yothers? Great!

COMBAT Couldn't you just "unmake" them instead of killing them?

IF YOU BUILD IT They will glow.

Dungeon Maker: Hunting Ground

PSP

PSM SCORE 7.0 out of 10

IF YOU BUILD IT, YOU CAN PLAY IT

Does building and monitoring your own dungeon sound cool? If you scoffed, stay away. With no real stats, abysmal levels instead of experience points, you gain stats through a dazzling array of haphazard quests. *Dungeon Maker* is not your standard RPG experience. However, if you were intrigued by the metal proposition, you'll find a unique opportunity. Piecing together your own dungeons, strolling (and fighting) through them each day, and trying to achieve higher ratings to attract better monsters to your lair is engrossing in the same inexplicable way as watering crops in *Harvest Moon*. It's addictively odd for anyone, but some like that will adore it. TERESA DON

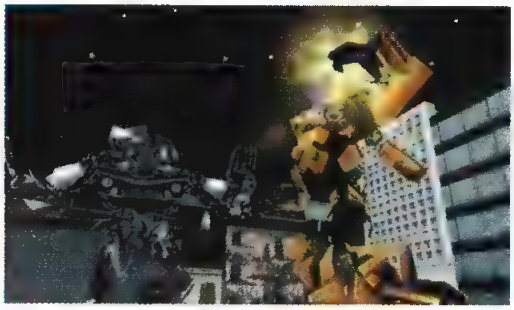
Transformers: The Game

PS3

PSM SCORE 3.0 out of 10

THEIR WAR. OUR WORLD. YOUR PAIN.

Unlike its giant robot heroes and villains, this game unfortunately can't disguise itself as anything but a rushed cash-in that's riddled with bugs and wholly unworthy of a $60 price tag. Even for the most hardcore *Transformers* fan, this game becomes an excruciating exercise in frustration after you've quickly gotten over the "wow" factor of transforming. (You know it's missed the mark when the controller diagram before levels reads "convert" and not "transform.") Unless you absolutely must collect throwaway pickups to unlock the G1 color schemes, this is an almost mercifully short experience. From the poorly encoded and nonsensical cutscenes to the broken level design and loads of bugs, it's one big mess. RANDY NELSON



Transformers: The Game

PSP

PSM SCORE 5.0 out of 10

PROBABLY WON'T TRANSFORM ANYONE INTO A PSP OWNER

The best thing that can be said about the PSP version of *Transformers: The Game* is that it's not as bad as its PS3 compatriot. In fact, it's a passable linear blast-a-thon with spiffy transforming robots, but that's all it is. Think of the most generic action game possible and pop in the robots in disguise. Voilà: you have this game. After the first few times you transform, you'll wish you could turn it into another, better PSP game. For what it's worth, it has some decent unlockable extras that come in handy in its ad hoc multiplayer modes – something that can't be said for its console counterpart. RANDY NELSON

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: The poorly received *Beast Wars: Transformers* was released on the PS one, earning a disgraceful one out of five from us. It looks like 2004's *Transformers* (based on the Armada line) is the only good *Transformers* game around (we gave it an 8/10).

Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer

PS3 PSM SCORE 5.0 out of 10

MEDIOCRE FOUR DOESN'T HAVE QUITE THE SAME RING TO IT

Want to be a superhero? [illegible] don a cape and rescue your neighbor's cat out of a hedge – that would be more empowering and satisfying than anything you'll do in *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*. The concept is cool – battle as a team, utilizing unique skills to overcome challenges – but the execution is lacking. A "puzzle" means using Mr. Fantastic's stretchy arms to push an [illegible] unreachable button. Levels drag on [illegible] with brainless enemies and mundane terrain. To add insult to injury, the game is mind-bogglingly easy (your teammates resurrect shortly after they die, so it's almost impossible to lose). Even franchise fans should be wary, because this game has fantastically little [illegible]. TERESA DUN

THAT'S SUPER! [illegible]

Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer

PS3 PSM SCORE 3.0 out of 10

ON THE PLUS SIDE, IT'S BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL PS ONE GAME...

It's a rare occurrence to find a game so boring that you fall asleep mid-button mash. It's even rarer to wake up five minutes later to see that your characters have managed to destroy the dozens and dozens of enemies that spawned (without any help from you), and the force field blocking access to the next room has been unlocked (you'll need to repeat the same ritual in there). Yes, we've just described *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*. The gameplay is similar to the PS3 version – but with a static camera, limited hero skills, boss fights that drag across multiple levels, and mediocre PS2 graphics, the end result is an irritating mess of pointless repetition. TERESA DUN

Surf's Up

PS3 PSM SCORE 4.0 out of 10

TOTAL WIPEOUT

We have to admit that this movie tie-in extreme racing game (think *SSX*, but on the ocean) can be, surprisingly enough, pretty fun at times. Sure, *Surf's Up* is simplistic, but it is a kid's game, after all, and completing the harder point challenges can be somewhat difficult. Yes, we were actually enjoying the game – until we realized we were done. In a scant three hours, we had not only beaten every level, but we had also unlocked all the hidden characters, levels, and boards. A competitive multiplayer mode adds some longevity, but for a game that costs $50, three hours of single-player gameplay is simply unacceptable. TOM HOLOIEN

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: We reviewed Acclaim's *Fantastic Four* for the PS one. It has the distinction of being the worst game we've ever reviewed, getting a shameful half a point out of five. Only *Cosmic Race* has scored lower (0 out of 5 in UGP).

Hardware

Pelican Air Flo Cooler for PS3

PSM SCORE **7.5** out of 10

TURNS DOWN THE HEAT, BUT IS IT REALLY NECESSARY?

When you spy a PS3, do you find yourself in awe of its sleekness or frowning at its bulkiness? Whatever your perception, Pelican's Air Flo Cooler enhances it. With a single thin piece that clips to the top (or right side, if the machine is horizontal), this cooling system has curves that melt into the PS3's original design. Pelican even includes different color trims (black for the 20GB system, chrome for the 80GB one) to ensure proper camouflage. The Air Flo is quiet, though can be heard above the ghost-like whisper of the PS3. You probably don't really *need* a PS3 cooling system, but if for some reason you want one anyway, the Pelican Air Flo Cooler is an unobtrusive and effective choice. TERESA DUN

COOL You might have a hard time seeing it, but it's there.

info

PRICE	$29.99
MADE BY	Pelican

Nyko Intercooler for PS3

info

PRICE	$29.99
MADE BY	Nyko

CONTROL For that "hands-on" appeal.

PSM SCORE **7.0** out of 10

FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO CONTROL THEIR COOL

If you're in the market for a PS3 cooling system and you enjoy having control over your gadgets, you might prefer Nyko's Intercooler to Pelican's Air Flo. Although it's bulkier – two parts instead of one – and doesn't follow the integrity of the PS3's design as well, the Intercooler has a knob that lets you change your fans' strength. Watching a Blu-ray movie? Turn the fans to low. At the tail-end of a 24-hour gaming session? Crank up those babies to full blast. It'll cause an earful of noise pollution, though. The fact that it uses the PS3's power supply is a double-edge sword: On the one hand, fewer wires to trip over; on the other hand, you can't turn off the fans completely without turning off your PS3 as well. TERESA DUN

Corsair Flash Survivor GT

PSM SCORE 7.0 out of 10

FRANKLY, WE'D RATHER JUST BUM AROUND ON OUR COUCHES

Ever had one of those dreams where an earthquake hits during a flash flood as a tornado warning goes off... and all you can think about is that level in *Resistance* that took you two hours to beat and how you don't want to play through it again? Well, a PS3 is probably too heavy and fragile to lug around in a natural disaster, but if you had one of Corsair's water resistant, anti-shock 8GB Flash Survivor GT drives, you could rest easy. It even has imitation dog tags so you can carry your data around your neck. Does it work? Absolutely! Is it really necessary, especially for $130? For everyday use, probably not, but assuming you want your saved games, movies, pictures, mp3s, etc. to survive the apocalypse, this is what you want. TERESA DUN

info

PRICE: $130 (for 8GB)
MADE BY: Corsair

SAFE
World's ending? No worries! Not with this baby!

Rock Commandos Widow Maker Wireless Bass Guitar Controller

PSM SCORE 9.0 out of 10

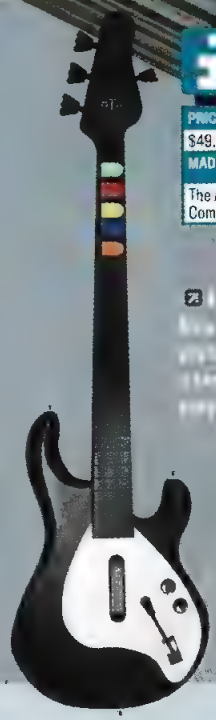
ROCK HARD WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT YOUR PS2

One thing that's always bothered us about *Guitar Hero* controllers is that they're wired, preventing you from freely rocking out while you play, lest you wreck your PS2. Well, the folks at The Ant Commandos have heard our plea, giving us a wireless solution.

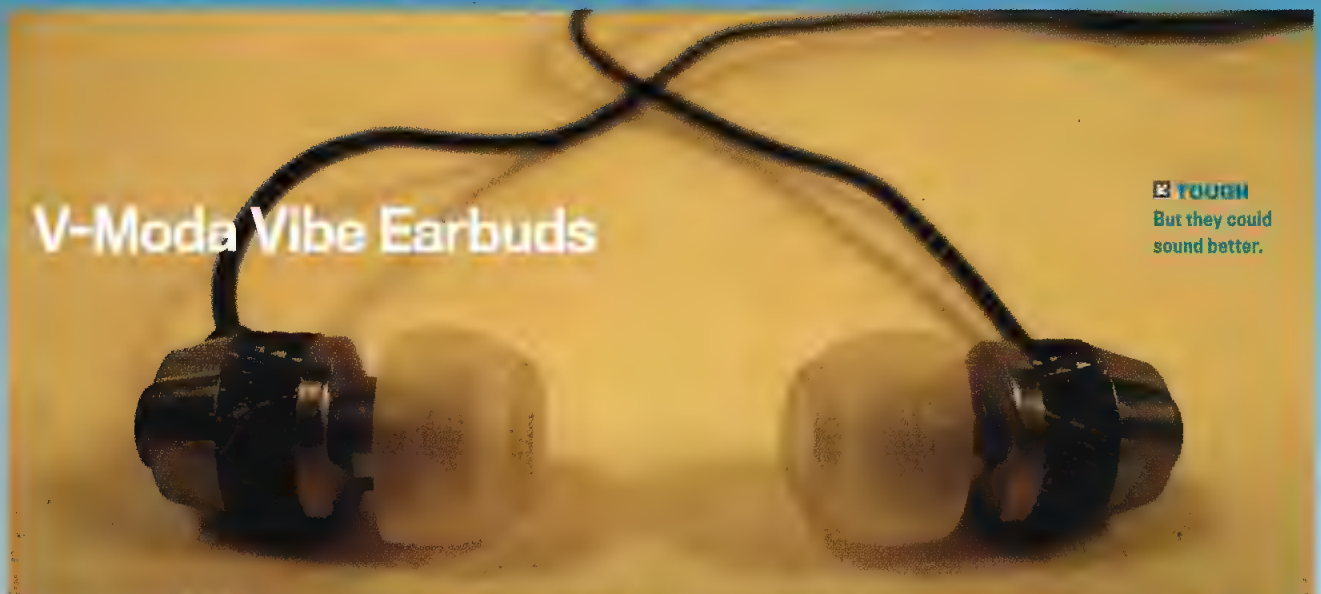
You should immediately notice that the Widow Maker Bass is, well, a bass guitar, complete with four faux-tuning knobs. TAC makes wireless guitars as well, but we actually found that the elongated neck on the bass fit better than the guitars', which always felt small. The lack of wires doesn't hurt response time at all, and actually makes playing *Guitar Hero* much more fun. Our only complaint is that sometimes – very rarely – it would lose the signal for a moment, making us miss some notes. It's a bit expensive at $50, but overall, the Widow Maker Bass does what a peripheral should do: enhance the gameplay experience.
TOM HOLDIEN

info

PRICE: $49.99
MADE BY: The Ant Commandos



V-Moda Vibe Earbuds



TOUGH But they could sound better.

PSM SCORE **7.0** out of 10

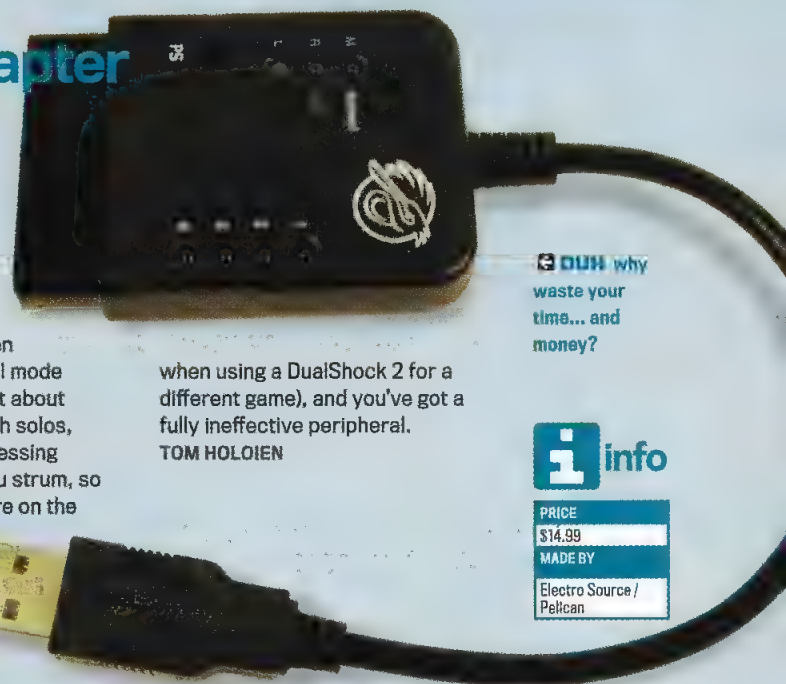
ROCK SOLID, BUT SOMEWHAT LACKING IN QUALITY

For a product that's obviously trying very hard to be stylish, the V-Moda Vibe earbuds are actually pretty good in terms of overall sound quality. From an industrial design standpoint, they're ace. Everything from [illegible] machined, and high quality. Good looks are one thing, but we buy headphones for sound. In this respect, these buds are good but not great. They produce good tone across the board, but, despite their billing, do not deliver exceptionally punchy bass or clear highs. For use with [illegible] which means louder sound at lower volume settings. You can get much better sound in about half the price from the likes of Sony's own MDR-V1 buds, which this reviewer never leaves home without. However, it's pretty much a given that the V-Moda's construction will last longer. RANDY NELSON

info

PRICE
$101
MADE BY
V-Moda

Pelican PS2 to PS3 Adapter



PSM SCORE **2.0** out of 10

A SO-SO IDEA WHOSE TIME ALMOST CAME... SORT OF, ANYWAY

We, like many of you who will be interested in this PS2 to PS3 adapter, picked it up because it says right on the box, "Works with *Guitar Hero 1* & *2*." Well, we can tell you that while it does "work" with *Guitar Hero* in the strictest sense of the word, it doesn't work nearly as well as we wanted, or you should expect.

Let's start with the can nots: You can't do hammer ons or pull offs, you can't play a high note while holding down a lower fret, and you can't activate star power by raising the guitar neck, only by pressing the select button. This effectively makes it impossible to play on anything above medium mode, and even that's not easy. Tutorial mode doesn't work, so forget about figuring out those tough solos, and the frets you're pressing won't highlight until you strum, so you won't know if you're on the wrong one until it's too late. Top it all off with some hefty lag (even when using a DualShock 2 for a different game), and you've got a fully ineffective peripheral. TOM HOLOIEN

DUH why waste your time... and money?

info

PRICE
$14.99
MADE BY
Electro Source / Pelican

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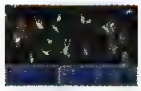
The List OF RECENT BEST GAMES

PSP:



Final Fantasy II

No levels, no class system... even for its time, *Final Fantasy II* was above the humdrum. For those who played the original, take a nostalgic walk down memory lane. For the rest, discover how your favorite RPG elements originated (or were adapted).

Score: 8.5

Tales of the World: Radiant Mythology

Want an RPG that you can put in your pocket? In *Radiant Mythology*, instant teleportation and bite-sized quests allow for meaningful and gratifying gameplay even when you're on the run.

Score: 8.0

Final Fantasy

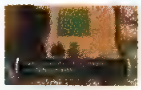
Ah, the game that started it all. What better time than now to play (or replay) the game that launched a genre... now with improved graphics to boot. True it's old school, but old school game can rock, especially when they're *Final Fantasy*.

Score: 8.0

Prince of Persia: Rival Swords

For some reason, this game reminds us of *God of War*... maybe because of the epic moves. Wall-running, time-morphing, chainwhip battles – the Prince is as busy as ever in this exotic adventure.

Score: 8.0



Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon

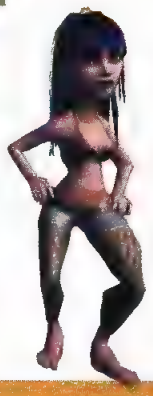
Farming-shmarming – who'd want to play a game about that? We would! If you've never tried this charming agricultural sim series, you're missing out on a strangely satisfying experience.

Score: 8.0

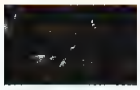
Brooktown High

Don't have the courage to ask girls (or guys) out? Think of *Brooktown High* as practice... the characters are pretty realistic, but they can't really slap you if you misguidedly think charming conversation equals calling their mamas fat.

Score: 8.0



PS3:



The Darkness

Jackie Estacado is an evil man, performing brutal acts with supernatural forces. It's a hell of a ride to see his world up close. It's well-acted, well-produced, and shocking fun from start to finish. You may need steely nerves, but it'd be a shame to pass this up.

Score: 9.0

Ninja Gaiden Sigma

Are you ready for a challenge? One so frustrating it may make you want to rip your Sixaxis apart with your bare hands? Cue in *Ninja Gaiden Sigma*, a fighting game that's gorgeous, complex, brutal, but oh so satisfying when you finally learn to master it.

Score: 9.0

MLB 07: The Show

Baseball fans, it's time to put away those peanuts and Cracker Jacks, and get on the field to play some ball. You *could* go to your local park. Or, you could buy *MLB 07: The Show* and enjoy a realistic and complex baseball experience virtually. (Better yet, do both!)

Score: 8.0

SLOW AND STEADY

Bit by bit, we're starting to see an increase in excellent PS3 games (such as these). If you haven't already, you might want to start saving up some cash for a PS3 so you can really play them!

PS2:

Odin Sphere

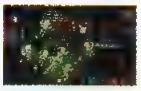
With its lush, decadent backgrounds, fairy tale plot, and dreamy soundtrack, *Odin Sphere* is like a bedtime story come to life. Yes, its 2D, but it's beautifully crafted, highly stylized 2D. If you're looking for a rich, slightly surreal experience, *Odin Sphere* is a must.

Score: 9.0

Tomb Raider: Anniversary

Rejoin the audacious, well-endowed Lara Croft on her first adventure once again in this anniversary edition of the original *Tomb Raider*. Revamped graphics, new moves, updated levels, and added puzzles make this game well worth your time.

Score: 8.5



GrimGrimoire

When you're trapped in a time loop at a magical school, the only thing to do is hunt grimoires that will let you free yourself. With a unique concept for an RTS game and cutesy, Japanese-style demons, ghosts, and dragons as your enemies, how can anyone resist checking it out?

Score: 8.0

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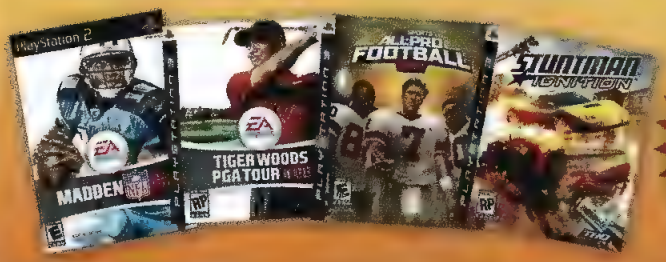

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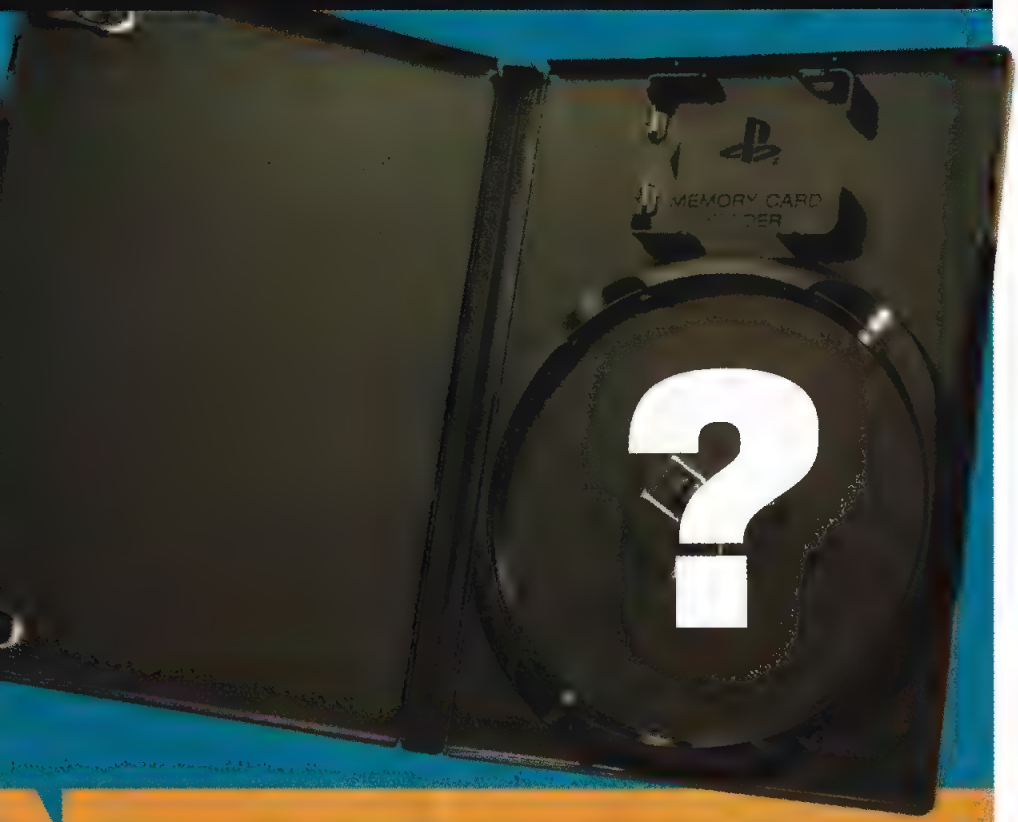
letters

We want, nay, *need* to hear what you think about your PS2, your hopes, fears, and dreams for PS3, and/or secret places you use your PSP.

Letter of the Month



GAME BOX SWITCH SNITCH

I'm writing this as a warning to all gamers. I bought a brand new PS3 game and when I got home and opened the wrap, there was no game inside. I returned to the store immediately and told the manager. They told me they never heard of a problem like that and would call another store to see what they could do. After about a half hour, I was told that because I opened the package there was nothing they could do and that I would have to contact the district office and file a complaint.

I was also told I would have to contact the game maker because the store records showed the game was "sealed" the whole time. The store also implied that I just "stole" the game out of the box and was trying to get another one for free.

After the manager took my information, I went home with my $63 box. No more than five minutes after getting home, the manager called and said they checked other games in the case and that they too were missing. The store said that they must have an employee stealing the games and that if I came back they would make the exchange. So after three hours and three trips to the store, I was finally able to get the game I paid for. I encourage people to open their games at the store before they leave, so they don't have to go through the same trouble I did. *–Jason Pritzlaff, Oak Creek, WI*

ROB: Hopefully this is a very isolated incident, but the issue of returning opened games is pretty serious if a customer finds a problem. It's definitely not a bad suggestion to check your game box at the store to avoid potential problems, but we're glad your situation was resolved amicably.

Sept's mail...

PARENTS VS BOOBS

In the July 2007 issue, Julian wrote a letter asking about the swimsuit edition of PSM. In Justin's response, he mentioned that there were parents complaining. All I have to say to that is some parents need to figure out where their priorities are. In PSM, you review games like *GTA IV* and *God of War 2*, and if I were a parent, I'd be more worried about my kid looking at violent images than art of half naked women. Since when have boobs hurt more people than violence? I personally wouldn't mind my kid looking at either after a certain age, but you better be complaining about the violence before the sex. *–Adrien Guerard, Chicago, IL*

ROB: As you point out, you're not a parent, and the parent should always be the final arbiter for their kids on what's considered acceptable media, whether that's games, music, movies, or comic book characters with inflated boobs (I know I'm old enough to know better, but really, boobs – or preferably boobies – is about the best word in the English language). At least by objecting to the material it shows the parent is taking an active interest in what the kids are reading.

IRRATIONAL FAN BOYS?

There has, understandably, been a large amount of controversy over such games as *Assassin's Creed*, *Devil May Cry 4*, and (possibly) *Metal Gear Solid 4* going multiplatform. Though I realize that gaming is a money-making business and that reaction to *DMC 4*'s console hopping has been much too extreme, I still wish to defend the "fan boy" reaction so eviscerated in July's "Letters" section (Quit Bitchin'!, July 07). As a lifelong gamer, many

Straw poll: email me at rob@psmonline.com with the subject line "Swimsuit Issue" and let's democratically get a consensus. Should we bring it back, or is its time done and gone?

PlayStation questions or comments? Contact our staff at **letters@psmonline.com**, with "General Letters" in the subject line. Our letter answerers are standing by!

of us become emotionally attached to our series. *Metal Gear Solid* is the closest thing the PlayStation has to a signature series, and I would personally much rather see it stay on Sony's console.
So before you automatically rip apart the fanatical fan boys for "irrationally" crying foul when another series goes to the 360 or Wii, remember: this is still a "console war," and, without exclusives, we may not have a reason to buy a console that is more expensive than its competition
–James Hill, San Jose, CA

TOM: Let me just start by saying that none of the series' above have "gone to the 360" – they're just multiplatform, so you can still play them on PS3 if you want to (and for the record, *MGS4* is still PS3 exclusive). That said, you're right, exclusive games are a big part of winning the console war, and we definitely don't want games to go to other platforms. Sony's still got some big exclusive games coming (*God of War 3* or *Final Fantasy XIII* anyone?) though, so don't worry just yet.

STOP SONY-BASHING

Am I the only one who is completely sick and tired of all the Sony bashing that's been going on for the better part of two years now? Not only from the gaming media/press, but in the gaming community as well, and I think it's pathetic. All Sony has done is create two of the greatest systems in history, both the cream in their respective crops and everyone is whining that they're too expensive or that they're home to no great games. I believe people are dogging them because they can't/won't afford them! Enough already!!!!
–Del, Robaware, NJ

ROB: Sony definitely deserved some of its bashing, but clearly that time is done. Add a $100 wireless adapter to the cost of a $479 Xbox 360 Elite system and you've got virtually the price of a PS3, and you also have Blu-ray, which has won the new DVD format war, allegedly (see p. 46 for more). A strong showing of games at E3 (which may be done by the time you read this) will set Sony and its PS3 well on its way to a successful future.

SAVE DANTE

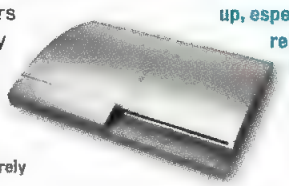
I am undeniably a fan of the *Devil May Cry* series, and Dante is my favorite game character of all time. So naturally, I am extremely frustrated by Capcom's decision to have Nero as the main character in *DMC4*. Dante is the true star of *DMC*, and if they are going to make a new character, they should try to make one that isn't an almost exact clone of Dante, right down to the rolled-up coat sleeves. I think most players will stick with Dante when they can select him, and Nero will be left behind in the same dirty dumpster as Lucia.

–Nick Petro, The Internet

ROB: Good point. And I agree it's odd. I suppose the upside is setting up further possible *DMC* antics between the two twin-like protagonists. *DMC 4* is playing pretty well, though, so we expect good things whichever character you're controlling.

PS3: IT'S ALL OVER!

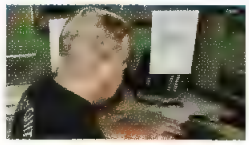
Let me tell you a little story of why I am so FREAKING scared that the PS3 is gonna fail. I work for the railroad here in Lincoln, NE and the other day I was working with a fellow switchman named "Jim" (name changed to protect the innocent). "Jim" told me his kid's PS2 broke, and he does not know what to do (they have been whining constantly about this fact). It should be noted that "Jim" is what I would consider your average dad, for the tween group set. He is late 30s/early 40s and considers videogames only for the kids, and wouldn't know what broadband was if it kicked him in the face. Anyways, "Jim" said he looked at the PS3, and there is no way he is paying $600 for a game machine, especially when the "XBOX is $200 cheaper" (Jim's words). I tried to explain that really there is no difference with Blu-ray built in and wireless, but "Jim" did not care. At this point I heard a million Sony shareholders crying and felt my stomach drop. I can imagine tens of millions of dads just like "Jim." Is this it for the Playstation brand or what?
–Matt Lorenz, Lincoln, NE



TERESA: Nuclear winter, an outbreak of a deadly virus, nightmares of aliens in white suits prodding your, er, privates while they blow up the Earth – those are things to be "freaking scared" about. I don't think you need to worry so much about the status of the PlayStation brand. Yes, the PS3 launch was a little sluggish, but in time, I think you'll see sales picking up, especially as more games are released. All it takes is just a little patience!

At Your Service

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Rob Smith
July 1997 I'd just moved from IDG's PC Games magazine to be Executive Editor on the launch of PC Accelerator here at Imagine (as we used to be known). I became PSM de facto *FIFA* reviewer some time later!



MANAGING EDITOR
Bill Donohue
Ten years ago, I was just coming to the realization that liberalism was a mental disease that should be stamped out. Oh, you mean magazine wise? Uh... I joined PSM around issue 16, so 10 years ago I was with UGP.

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Randy Nelson
Just a little over 10 years ago, I'd just gotten my start at Future (then Imagine Media) as associate editor on Ultra Game Players Online. I wrote previews for PSM's very first issues after hours.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Justin Cheng
So, 10 years ago, I was a high school student who was really into gaming – particularly PlayStation stuff – so, of course, I read PSM. From reader to staffer in 10 years – it's amazing, really.

ART DIRECTOR
Ken Bousquet
I was art directing MacAddict magazine and we were probably embarking on our one year anniversary issue. Apple had survived the visionary helm of Gil Amelio and Steve J. was back *in the house*.

EDITORIAL INTERN
Tom Holoien
I wasn't even in high school 10 years ago... I was a bright-eyed little sixth grader who had just sold his SNES and all his games for a PlayStation and *FFVII* because PSM told me to. I think I made the right choice.

IF WE PRINT YOUR LETTER, then you get this special shirt, made only for you letter writers! So **REMEMBER** to include your street address. We can't email them.

10 Years Ago The letters section of the first PSM was almost entirely made up by the staff. We don't do that any more, naturally!

September's mail... Hot Topic!

SHAKEN... *AND* STIRRED

I'm glad you mentioned **the difference between the analog touchiness on the PS2 and PS3 controllers** when you did since I was trying to figure out why I was **sucking so bad** at *Mad Maestro* this time around. But I hopped back to the PS2 and wow, the difference becomes **readily apparent**. I wanted to at least use the system for *something*. Stupid, non-rumbling jerk of a machine! *–Joe, The Internet*

I just needed to chime in on your PS3 controller redesign. I'm hoping the fact that it's such a radical departure from the DS/SIXAXIS is really more for effect than for what you really want in the design. **My biggest gripe is with the analog sticks**. If Sony decides to move them, I'll cry. I was already **disappointed** when they **canned the boomerang** (that's the most ergonomic shape possible; plus it looked smaller in perspective, but **if they change the layout of the analog sticks it'll kill me**. I only wrote this because I'm worried someone at Sony might actually like your redesign. Here's hoping for a better controller that stays true to its former greatness. *–RM, The Internet*

The PSM Take:

ROB: Don't worry, not a chance that Sony will take our idea and use it! But we have to disagree about the Boomerang. That thing was a disaster in the making. For now, we'll just take rumble support to at least keep up with the Joneses! Is the PS2 controller the best ever?

W.W.J.D?

(What Would Justin Do?)

Dear Justin, I am 14, and my mom is going to get about $3000 (hospital bills – some kid attacked me last year) soon. I have wanted a PSP for some time now. Do you think I should ask her for the $200 to get one and the charging set? Thanks man! *–Brandon Logan, Caledonia, MS*

JUSTIN: Sorry to hear about your troubles, Brandon. I know you want a PSP, but you should really focus on getting those hospital bills paid for now. The PSP will be around for a while, so don't put extra pressure on your mother.

Caption Contest: Make us laugh, win a prize

THINK YOU'RE FUNNY?

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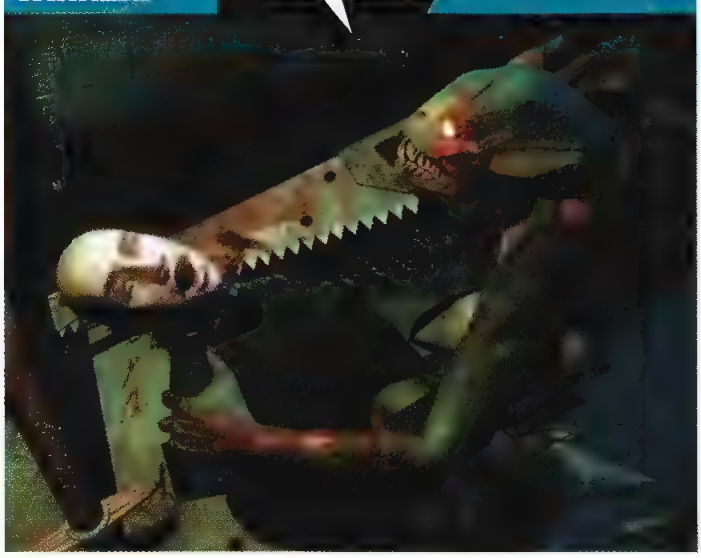
Write a caption for this screen and email it to **contest@psmonline.com** with the subject line **"127 Caption Contest!"** THE DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 1ST. If we choose your caption as the funniest, it'll net you a PSM Prize Package, **so include your full name and mailing address!**

JUNE'S CAPTION WINNER:

"Man, the things I do to get a head."

Wayne Whittenberg, San Antonio, TX



10 Years Ago The first BOOMERanG (Balloon Observations Of Millimetric Extragalactic Radiation and Geophysics) test flight launched. Amazing what you can find from Wikipedia on the last day of deadline when you type in "1997" and "boomerang"!

Finally...

HERE ARE THE WINNERS!

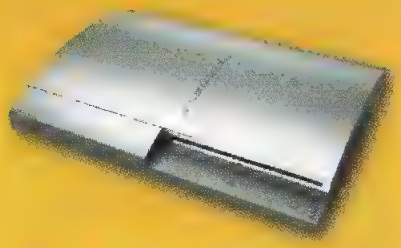
We realize it's been a long time since we first ran some of these contests and we figured that maybe the people who entered the contests might like to know who won. So without further ado, here are the winners of our past contests. Congrats to all!

Issue 119 -
20 blu-ray movies
John Weger, Lakewood, Co

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER
Enrico Della Corna, Maclean, VA (We need your mailing address!)

Issue 120 -
10 best games of 2006
Michael Klinski, Sioux Falls, SD

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER
James Thorton, Whitefield, ME (We need your mailing address!)



Issue 121 -
60 GB PS3
Mark Goettel, Ann Arbor, MI

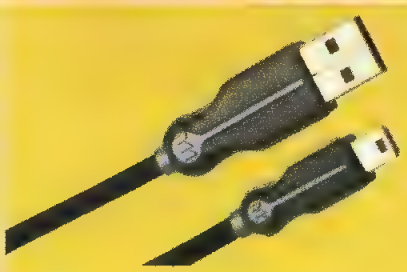
CAPTION CONTEST WINNER
Kosuke Kagawa, Nashville, TN (We need your mailing address!)

Issue 122 -
Ninja suit and sword
Christopher Reiter, Glen Rock, NJ

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER
Kelsie Chodrick, Ponca City, OK

Issue 123 -
3 Devil May Cry PS3s
1. Brian Kasdorf, Marinette, WI
2. Joel Bernardini, Fort Myers, FL
3. Mario Carcamo, Abilene, TX

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER
Jared Ferguson, Fresno, CA

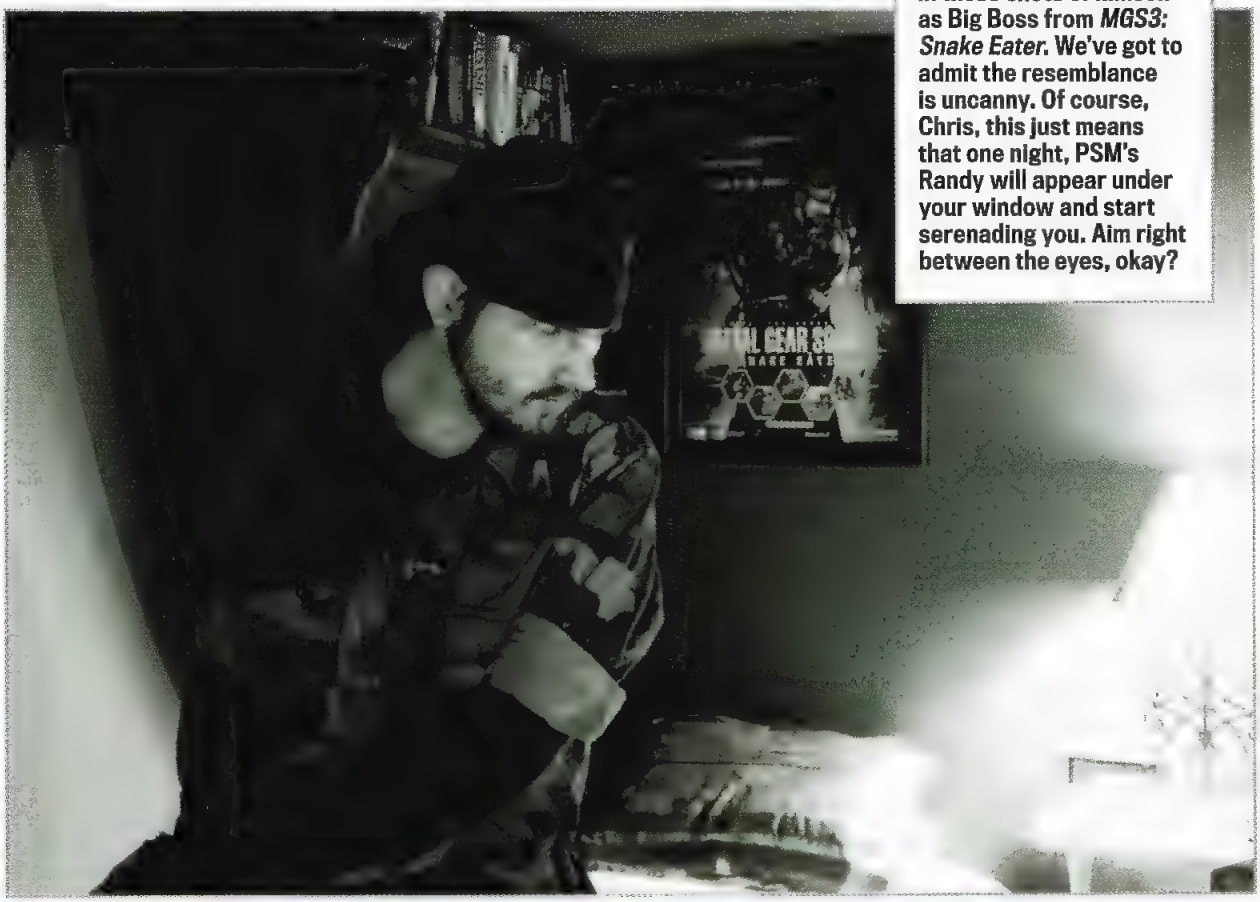


Issue 124 -
Monster PS3 Cables
Ryan D. Sixt, La Habra Heights, CA

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER
Jason Billet, Goshen, IN

If you've had a letter published in PSM and have not received a T-shirt, please send an email to Contests@psmonline.com, with "Where's my shirt?" in the subject line. Remember to include which issue you were printed in and your full mailing address in the body, or you won't get a darn thing!

Fandom: Above and beyond the call...



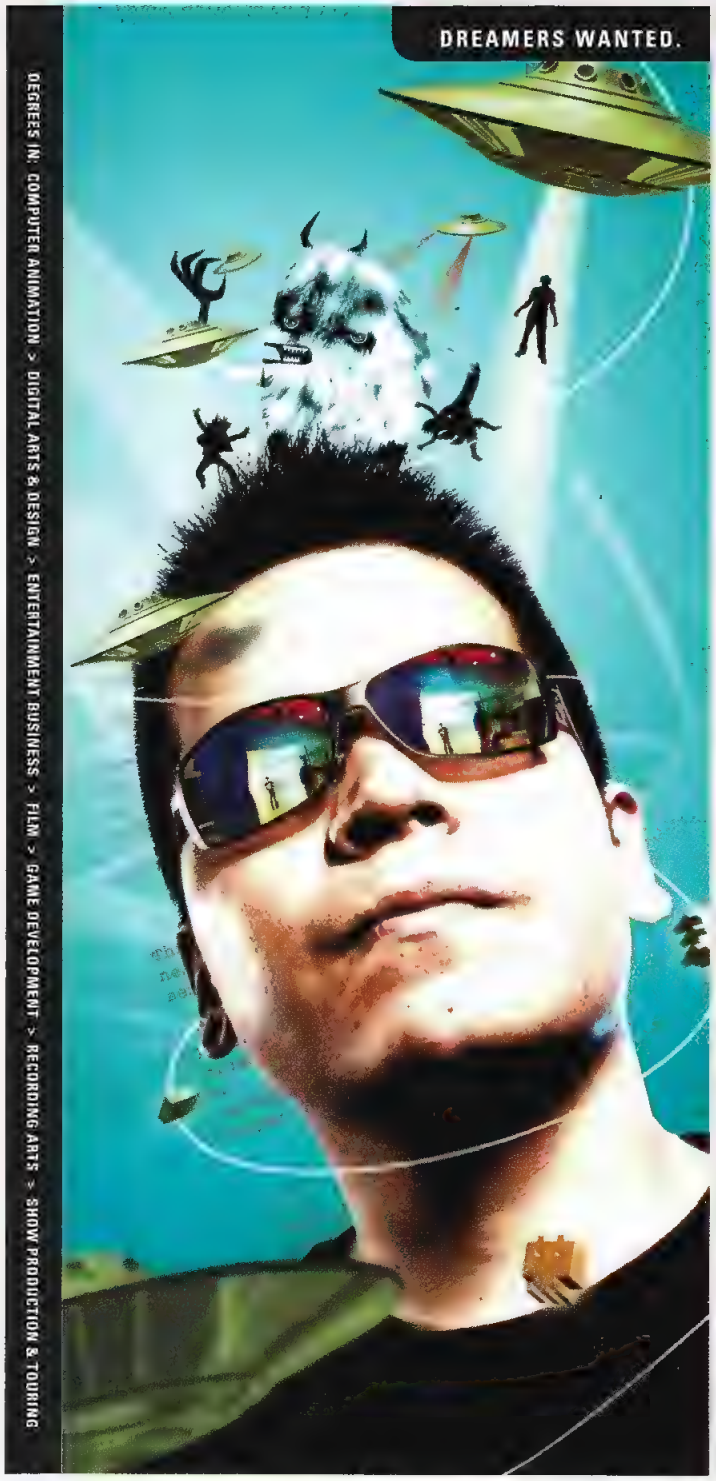
Christopher Brown sent in these shots of himself as Big Boss from *MGS3: Snake Eater*. We've got to admit the resemblance is uncanny. Of course, Chris, this just means that one night, PSM's Randy will appear under your window and start serenading you. Aim right between the eyes, okay?

SEND US STUFF! Send *your* displays of fandom to us at [redacted] with "Fandom" in the subject line. Art, websites, custom toys, cosplay... we want it all! The best stuff will be displayed here every issue!

10 YEARS OF PSM

10 years ago: We didn't have a Fandom section in PSM. Instead, we had a thing called MarketPlace, where gamers of all ages could hook-up via their email addresses, which we published. Come to think of it, we're lucky we never got sued!

You can check out this hilarious video of Grandma playing *Resistance* at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkCbWDeapAo. The language is definitely M-rated, however.



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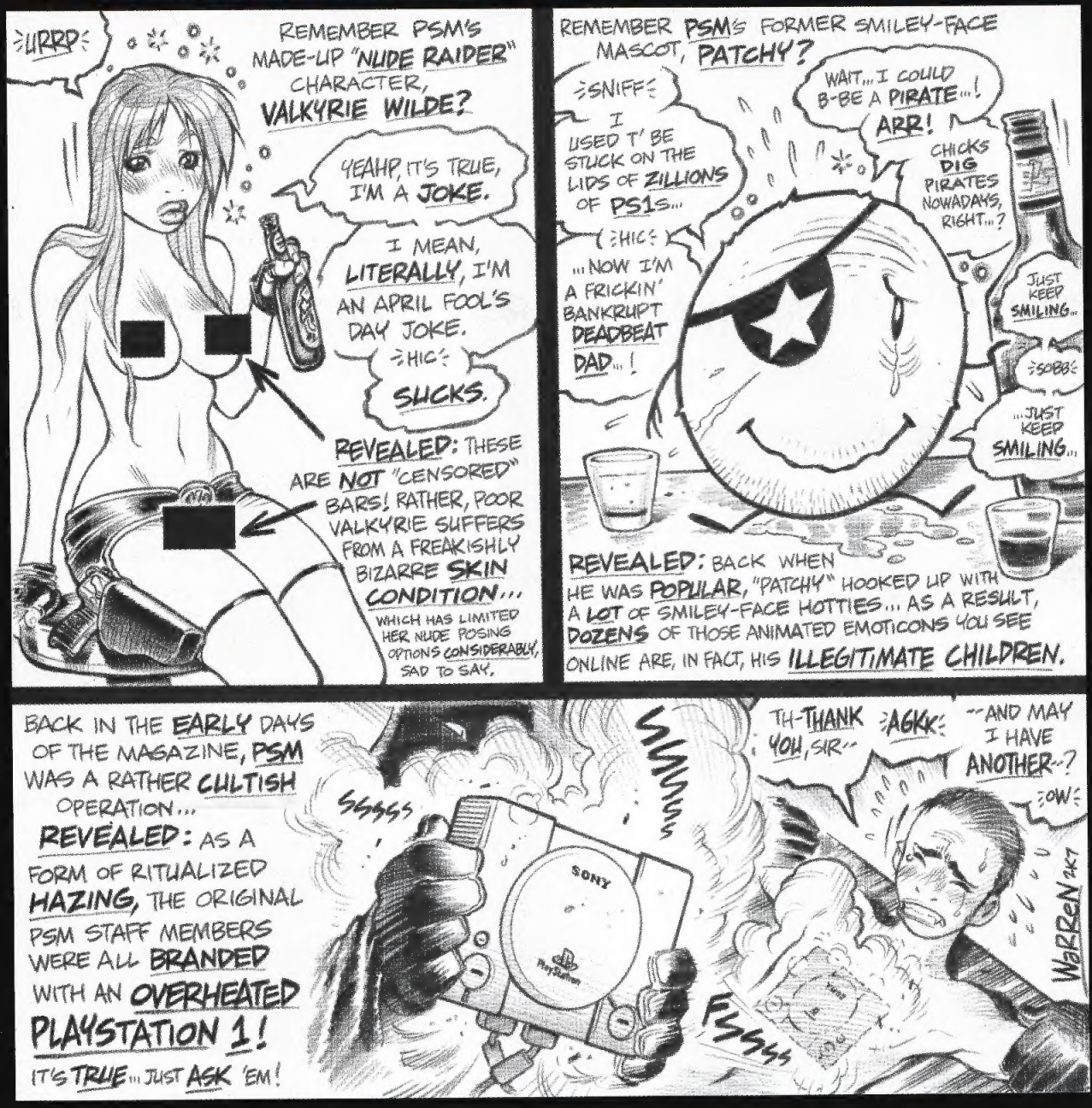
by Adam Warren

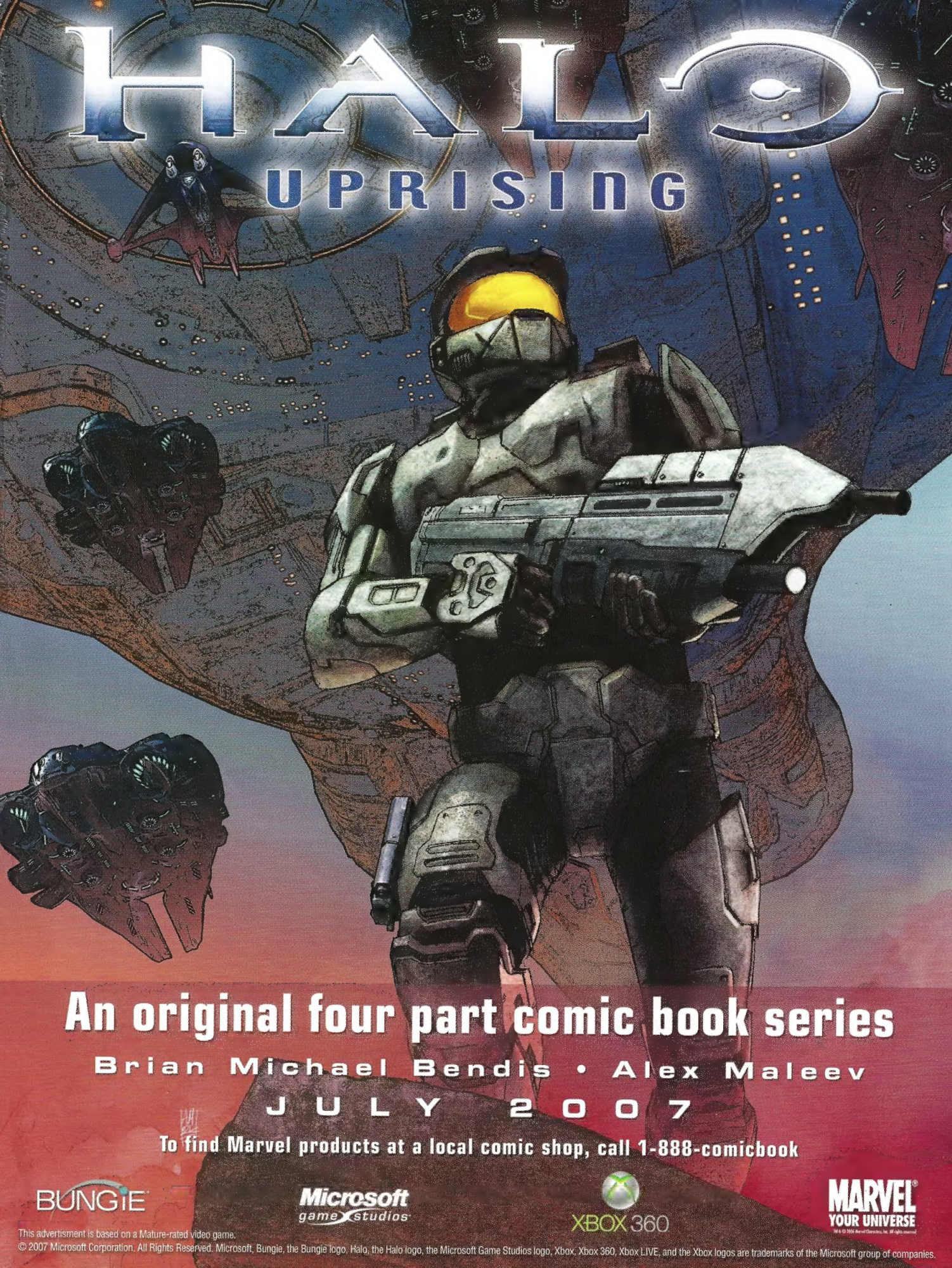
Old-Skool Secrets of PSM: 10th Anniversary Edition



Next Month in PSM

Killzone 2. Can't tell you what we'll have, but it'll be something! The new format E3 should bring with it a whole slew of announcements that will help cement PS3's growth through the end of the year. Playable *MGS4*? More on *GTA4*? We bring you the PS3 future.

It hints to the future... *Killzone 2* details coming soon!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	☐ Hart's War	☐ The Last Waltz		

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